

BRITAIN'S ONLY SCIENCE STORY WEEKLY

SCOOPS

The STORY
PAPER of
TO-MORROW
2^d
EVERY THURSDAY



THIS
STREAMLINED
WORLD

See Inside

New Triumph of British Engineering

World's Largest Vertical Lift Bridge

2,700 Ton Span over the Tees that Lifts in 2½ minutes

NOW that the Newport Bridge over the Tees at Middlesbrough is in operation, Britain has its first vertical lift bridge—and the largest in the world.

The bridge itself has a span of over 294 feet, and gives a clearance of 26

feet, together with two footpaths, each 6 feet wide.

When it is down for the passage of road traffic the bridge leaves a clearance of 21 feet of high water of spring tides, and in calm river weather it gives the "H.T." vessels of the bridge can be raised until there is a clearance of 24½ feet. The lifting span weighs 2,700 tons, and the

counterweights have a similar weight, yet the great machine can raise the span the 20 feet from the "down" to the "up" position in 2½ minutes!

The lifting motion is carried on steel wire ropes which pass over rollers in the counterweight boxes. These boxes are each of four counterweight sheaves, which are made of cast steel and are 10 feet in diameter. They are so grooved that they take ten wire ropes each.

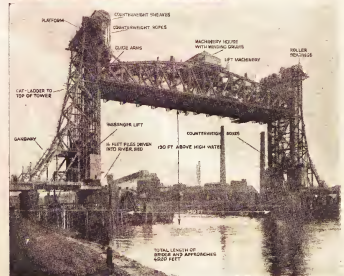
The sheaves are mounted on roller bearings. All the machinery for lifting the bridge is contained from a machine house set in the center of the lift span, and two electric motors drive the winding drums which pull the leading wire ropes.

Two sets of leading ropes are used. One set, for raising the bridge, is attached to the top of the side towers, while the second set, for lowering, is attached to the feet of the towers. As the winding drums rotate, one set of ropes is wound in and the other paid out.

Should the electricity supply fail, there is a manual crank hatched on the machine house to drive the drums, and if the wire also ran out, the bridge could be operated by hand. Electrically operated cables at each end of the bridge close the way to road traffic, and these, together with a set of traffic lights, are controlled by the local machinery controls and interlocked with them.

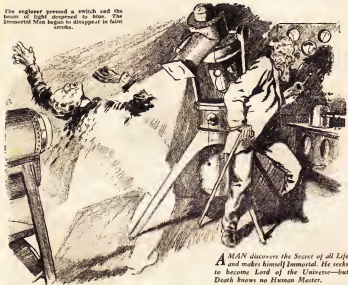
Naturally, very strong foundations were necessary for the two towers. These are built on four cylinders sunk into the river to depths of from 75 to 90 feet below high water. These cylinders closed in the lower ends of steel columns, while the upper parts are made up of cast-iron flues, bolted together and filled with concrete.

The bridge is another triumph of British Engineering.



The IMMORTAL MAN

The engineer pressed a switch and the beam of light deepened to blue. The Immortal Man began to disappear in faint smoke.



A MAN discovers the Secret of all Life and makes himself Immortal. He seeks to become Lord of the Universe—but Death knows no Human Master.

★ LORD OF THE UNIVERSE

DICK WAHRENDER was worried. He was the assistant of Professor Hymen, perhaps the greatest biologist living, and it was the Professor who was worrying him.

Hymen was ninety years of age, his great face lined with care, and it was true he retired flat, far from anything, a year ago he had started to work more feverishly than ever.

He had refused to let Dick assist him with his experiments. Night after night the young man had seen the streak of light under the locked door that told him the Professor was working late again.

But now it was worse than ever. For a whole fortnight the Professor had not stirred out of his laboratory. Food had been pushed to as a way through a hatch.

Now Dick hurried anxiously outside the door. The strain would kill the old man. Yet he knew the furring temper of the genius who had discovered a serum to cure cancer, and it was more than his job was worth to interrupt the Professor during one of his delicate experiments.

Suddenly, in his horror, he heard a peal of laughter come from the laboratory. It was a gleefully hysterical laughter. Peal after

peal of it came ringing from behind the locked door.

A horrible doubt assailed Dick's mind. The Professor had gone mad through overwork. He put his shoulder to the door and with one tremendous blow burst the lock.

An amazing sight met his gaze. Professor Hymen's arm was bared and he was cutting at it with a knife. Every time the blade sank into the flesh he gave vent to that hysterical laugh.

Dick darted forward and seized the Professor, but the man's strength was amazing for his years. He shook off his bulky young assistant, leapt on to a table and saved the knife high above his head.

"I have done it," he shouted. "I, John Hymen, I am the first immortal man!" Staggering back, Dick stared wordlessly up at the laughter. Hymen's eyes blazed. "You fool," he shouted. "Don't you see what I've done? Look!"

The Professor held out the arm he had just cut with a knife. Before Dick's astonished eyes the wounds were slowly closing, the flesh meeting . . .

In a few seconds there was not even a scar to show that the wounds had ever been inflicted.

"What do you mean?" asked Dick.

"How can you be mortal?"

But before the Professor went over to a huge glass tank by the wall. A dark red

liquid, anchored to two metal rods, was immersed in fluid inside the tank. Steadily, with a queer rhythmic motion, it was expanding and contracting.

From his own extensive knowledge of biology, the young man recognized it immediately. It was the heart of a whale.

"That was the starting point of my researches," declared the Professor. "Although it was taken from the creature in which it lived, that heart still continues to beat, because it is surrounded in a fluid which contains and nourishes it. There is no reason why it should not go on beating for ever—as I am going to do!"

"The cells of the body," he went on, "endure on, 'till death do them part. But ages ago scientists on their evolution argued the habit of dying. We call this habit old age. But if it were not for the auto-destruction of waste decay, the cells of the body, like this whale's heart, could go on living for ever."

"My first discovery was how to prevent the instincts from asserting the habit acquired ages back. Eventually I discovered a new whose vibration, even more rapid than those of the cancer rays, stifles that pattern of the brain in which the old evolutionary instincts are located."

"Even then, however, although I was potentially immortal, I could be killed by disease or accident. If my throat was cut, I should bleed to death. But jelly fish can be

LORD HARDIDGE was a clean-shaven, grey-haired man with a back like a road and the dignified bearing of a 70-year senator. But at the moment he was badly rattled.

"Apprentice here was the slim figure of Professor Hymus, smart, even dandified. His clothes were like those worn by the fashionable young man. He was blond and smiling."

"I don't believe in money matters, Professor," began Lord Hardidge heavily. "I am representing the five largest insurance companies in this country. Between them they have the disposal of a thousand million pounds of assets."

"A very impressive figure," commented the Professor.

"Quite. As you may imagine, however, I have not come here for the purpose of selling you insurance. My purpose is different. Professor Hymus, six months ago you approached each of these companies and arranged for an annuity of five million sterling a year. It is not my business to enquire where you obtained the money to purchase these annuities, although I may hazard a guess."

"The point is that not only were these insurance companies aware that the others had been approached also, but provide an early of the same enormous amount, but then handed their shares on the assumption that you had the average expectation of life for a man of sixty, namely, five years."

"The astronomical size of the transactions has nothing to do with me," pointed out the Professor.

Lord Hardidge breathed heavily. "But it is monstrous! It is now obvious that you are going to live much longer. Some men even tell me you might be immortal. The life is in these five companies in trust. Between them they will be paying out twenty-five million sterling a year! And they only charged you a hundred million."

The laughter was stifled. He seemed to be seething the situation.

"That's their affair," he declared, "not mine. I announced some time ago that I was unlikely to live for many thousands of years. If I had died immediately after announcing the annuity my heirs would not have dreamt anything into your companies. Why should you expect to get anything back when the opposite happens?"

Lord Hardidge controlled himself with difficulty. "We appreciate that, naturally, it won't be a lifetime transaction. It will be finite. We are prepared to buy you out on the unfortunate bargain. What will you take, one and above the return of your principal, to cancel the annuity deal?"

The Professor reflected. "Three hundred million pounds?" he said at last.

The figure, pumped from his seat, was barely noticed.

"Impossible," he smiled.

"If I live for only another hundred years," pointed out the professor, "you will have secured a loss of about ten thousand million on the transaction. In fact your Companies will probably go bankrupt. I don't see how you can refuse."

Lord Hardidge took back in his chair, rubbing his brow.

"You're right, confessed it," he muttered. "We can't refuse. The money will be paid in a week."

A week later Heinsolter and the Professor shared in celebratory champagne.

"Three hundred per cent, profit!" jubilated the former. "My greatest coup!" It is all very well to complete that you built shore of the profits in currency, but who in the world but I, Heinsolter, could have begged, borrowed, and stolen a hundred million pounds for my estate?"

The Professor nodded. His eyes were staring with more inner thought.

"I do not grade you poor share," he said. "The financial side of my in-

ent to place without being told. A billion grows a new look. The odds of these ten stars are the same as the odds of human beings. I extracted the fluid which stored these inner constants to render their odds and registered it into my blood."

Hymus's own share with triumph. And at that moment Hiss realized that the Professor's whole bearing was that of a young man. His hands no longer shook. His face was still pink and youthful, but the skin seemed plump and youthful.

"Nothing can touch me!" shouted the Professor. "Pain, I am insulated by a flash of lightning I shall live for ever. My knowledge and power will continue to increase. I shall become the wisest man on the Earth. I am the destined Lord of the Universe!"

★THE WORLD WONDERS

"His vast audacity of the Royal Albert Hall resounded with peals of mockery and abuse.

In the centre stood the stocky figure of Professor Hymus.

Only a few days before he had been hooted and hissed, and very noisy. But now he was standing bolt upright, his more silver locks were ruffled, and his eyes blazed fire as they looked into the scorching snarl that was his audience.

Usually at the Stadium the Professor's lecture was amazing. Waterfalls would crash his.

The Professor had told the Albert Hall to describe to the world the wonderful discovery he had made.

But it had been too much for his listeners to swallow. The noise breakdown had been cut off abruptly at the point where the Professor announced that he was now immortal. The H.B.C. had decided that the one moment of religious had gone awry.

The laughter of the audience was more usual.

His demonstration that his flesh had the strength of steel almost instantaneously breaking up, inspired in some surprising. The scientific explanation of how his discovery had been arrived at was drowned in abuse.

Speaking with him, the Professor seemed for silence. In his last he seemed to abuse himself.

"Impossible! I came to tell you of the greatest gift the world has ever known. And you mock me? Very well. Here and now I give that I shall never die in the world the secret of my immortality. I, and I alone will be immortal on this earth!"

The Professor's words, and his swelling voice, seemed to goad the audience to fury. Although there was an element of indignation some might become admiration was free, there was a large percentage of indifferent spectators among his hearers. Yet they seemed to have lost all contact. The loud roars of Hymus's protestations were not directed to them.

Suddenly a voice rang out. "God bless! Wonderful! See if he is immortal!"

Dick Warrender hailed his cheer at the first laugh who jumped to to the platform and then turned to urge the Professor to leave to prevent a riot.

But Professor Hymus had already disagreed. . . .

For, still, and with the heady eyes of a pug, James Heinsolter stared at Dick Warrender.

Heinsolter was smart, handsome, and was regarded by the crowded audience in Europe.

"This immortality business—it is strange!" asked Heinsolter, a suspicious glint in his eyes. "The papers make fun of the old fellow. Yet a year ago they were calling him the shrewdest biologist in the world. It seems funny to me."

Warrender looked forward eagerly.

"He is right. I have seen things that make it certain that he has discovered some

method of getting, in at least delaying natural death."

Heinsolter granted.

"Hymus! That's the way I was feeling. Now look here, you go back to the Professor and tell him I want a word with him. Tell him I can see money in this idea of his!"

The young biologist shook his head.

"I'm afraid it's useless. The Professor won't discuss his discovery. He is determined to keep it to himself. He will not even let me ride the wave, although he regards me as his closest friend."

Heinsolter chewed his cigar in silence for a moment. Then he wrote the table with his finger tip.

"I don't want to know his secret," he said. "Go back and tell your employer I'm willing to see him. I'll show him how to make money out of this idea of his—without telling a soul how it's done."

Meanwhile, doubt was coming, like a rain, in the place at the heart of the Professor's conviction.

Months after month they saw his spy figure and his quick walk. Two men who were sixty years old had, at least, discovered some strange secret of youth.

His iron-grey hair was black now. He had discarded his spectacles. Any day he could be seen playing squash rackets at his club.

The Mighty ATOM

The Minute Particle that rules the World

WHAT is this "Atom"? You have often wondered it is "difficult" and in the case, "The Immortal Man" on this page an amazing scientific in opinion.

1. How small is it?

It is not defined as the smallest particle of matter, but while this will help you to understand, please allow us to tell you how we should say here with smaller particles.

It rules the world for all matter—everything, including you and me—composed of atoms.

The atom is made of a nucleus of protons (positive charges of electricity) with a number of electrons (negative charges of electricity) around it, and forming a continuous surface.

It contains an equal number of protons and electrons, and is therefore neutral, and again its number is its number depends on mass.

The lightest atom—hydrogen—consists of one proton and one electron, while the heaviest of atoms has no less than eighty protons.

It is not one atom idea of the size of the atom. It is not a tiny—its nucleus is about one billionth of an inch across.

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Men Clamour for Immortality

immortality is interesting, very interesting. It has given me an idea, and I am grateful for them. I shall take it up."

Helmholtz waved his knife. "By all means. I am going to give up business and retire. Unlike you, Professor, I am not immortal."

"Your position is incredible."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer arranged the silvered gathering of men round the banquet table. There could be made there realize the danger.

Professor Hymus is in the possession of our hundred and fifty million pounds," he began. "That is itself is of little importance. At least four other men in the world to-day are worth as much. Magnificent, the average of deaths, a worth three hundred million. But yesterday the Professor came to me and said he did not propose to touch a penny of the money. He was going to give it all in various investments, to accumulate at compound interest."

The Prime Minister looked at his watch.

"Well, what has that to do with us?" he asked. "He's entitled to do what he likes with his own money, isn't he?"

The Chancellor rounded on him.

That's the trouble. He is. And the consequences will be ghastly. In three hundred years that man's money will have grown so enormously that it will be well over the world. By the transfer of his fortune he will be able to wreck markets or make them. By bulk or bare expenditure he will be able to set a profit of a hundred million or so whenever he wants. And all the time this money will be accumulating . . . accumulating . . ."

Referring to make them realize the consequences, the Chancellor leaned forward, his prominent nostrils in his hand, his shadowy forehead.

"I can never say one thing, I say. If he lives on our decadence, and all we have struggled to create for them, will be under that man's heel. They will be his slaves, just as the dogs and the domestic cattle are our slaves."

"Even if they wish to shake off the tyrant, they will be unable to, because his tremendous wisdom, built up in four lifetimes, will anticipate their every move. And their won't want to be free for they will be his prisoners. Their children will be paid by him, and he will feed and clothe them. Don't you see what it means? All the things democracy has striven for—liberty and economic benefit and self-sufficiency—is doomed!"

But the slaves were unaffected by his oratory. The Prime Minister shook his head.

"His concern," he announced, "is with immediate problems. What can we do for any about what will happen three hundred years on? Hymus is just a freak. Why, we shall all be dead and forgotten by that time. We might just as reasonably start worrying about the sea eelings."

The Chancellor dropped dejectedly to his chair. It was as he feared. He could not hold them, nor weaken.

But what the Cabinet could not realize the people could. Or rather, they could see something more immediate than what might happen in five hundred years.

Hymus had the secret of immortality, and he was keeping it to himself!

The murmuring of voices spread at first in conversations. Then it spread to little meetings at street corners.

A question was asked in the House.

Would the Minister of Health state what steps he had taken to make available for the King's subjects the secret of immortality which Professor Hymus was understood to have discovered?

The Minister of Health admitted that the matter did not come within his Department.

Full excitement blazed. Members were

The Professor indicated the whole's heart gently pulsating inside the huge tank. "That was the starting point of my researches," he declared.



hounded by constituents. The newspaper dense columns were full of the subject. Sermons made reference to it. Doctors were implored by their patients to find the formula.

Then a sinister rumour spread. It was whispered that a chosen band of politicians had been entrusted with the secret of immortality, and that they had kept it to themselves, in order to become at last virtually dictators of the country.

It was this, more than anything, that started the immortality riots.

It was impossible, in those times, to hold a public meeting of any kind, because inevitably disorder arose when wild-eyed men and women demanded the rights that were being denied them.

Old men and women, in particular, were frantic at the chance of escaping death which was dangling in front of them, if only they could seize it.

The temper of the country was getting ugly. The Prime Minister feared his house. Any announcement he made would be misinterpreted. And every messenger he sent to the Professor's house came back with the information that the house was closed and that the Professor was absolutely refusing to see anyone.

Warily he rose to his feet. He turned to

the Chancellor. "I apologise. I ought to have reached the conference. Tonight we must decide between resignation and martial law."

Outside, in Downing Street, there was the clashing of an indignation mob, demanding, knowing, clamouring for immortality.

★THE IMMORTAL MAN DIES

DR. CUNNINGHAM, acknowledged to be the world's greatest expert on dying a strange apparatus.

At first glance it appeared to be a mass case of shimmering glass tubes and wires, with here and there quietly shaped, heat-resistant discs of metal.

But when Dr. Cunningham threw over a lever the whole apparatus glowed with light. Every part of it glowed with a distinctive phosphorescent glow.

Some of it had a hard quality that pained the eyes. Other parts threw off warm red rays which had an undeniably soothing effect. The whole apparatus pulsed and flickered with three strange unearthly lights.

Corningham rubbed his hands and spoke aloud.

"At last! After all these years I have discovered the secret of power—the splitting of the atom. With this apparatus I could blow the world to vapor. Or extract from a ton of coal enough energy to work every engine in the world."

Restlessly he rose and paced the laboratory. He was old and fragile. His hands shook as he lifted them to press his brow. He leaned on a stick when he began to walk and he could not cover the distance from one end of the laboratory to the other without resting, leaning on his stick and breathing heavily.

"I am getting to work!" he panted. As if moved by a sudden impulse he went to the mirror and looked at his face. It was pockmarked with innumerable wrinkles and the once bright eyes were blurred.

"Once Hyman was like that," he muttered. "Hyman is ten years older than I am. And now he looks a youngster! When I am dead, Hyman will be enjoying his youth—and the fruits of my invention!"

He looked to the door and called in his own ready voice. "Alfred, get the car out, and then drive me round to Professor Hyman's."

There was a creak round the Professor's house when Corningham arrived. They were looking up at the windows of the house. All others were turned away from the Professor's door as a rule, but the image of the great engineer's name was sufficient

to ensure his name being read up, and the lookers-on decided to see first.

Corningham took up a chair, gesturing. "Hyman," he said, when he had got his breath, "your life is in danger. The people are getting angry. I have come here to warn you that an attempt will be made to drag you from your house and kill you this evening. Immortal or not, I doubt if you will survive being treated in a building by an infuriated crowd of lookers-on."

As if in level substance to the engineer's words, a loud noise bustled through the window. The Professor peered out from behind the curtains.

Yes, there was certainly a crowd there. And they were waving sticks and shouting.

Corningham leaned forward and pointed a trembling finger.

"Hyman, you are the greatest figure since the pyramids. As a fellow scientist, I acknowledge it. I am proud to offer to you the hospitality of my home. But if the mob should guess where you have gone, the house is stricken in ignominious ruin, and guarded against all intruders by an electrified fence. My abode and car are at your back door. Come with me now, before the mob breaks in."

With a grateful smile, Hyman assented. Half an hour later, they were seated in the engineer's laboratory. Beside Corningham was his atom-splitting apparatus, the potent tool producer of unlimited power. The last hour explaining its working to the Professor.

"Very regrettable," commented the latter. "I sympathize with you."

"Thank you," answered the engineer. "Hyman, you, too, have discovered a great principle. That principle makes you immortal. Mine makes me all-powerful. Let us combine our forces. I will put this machine at your disposal. In return, give me the secret of immortality."

The other shook his head. "No, I cannot do it. I have decided to keep my life-power to myself. Most of the vigorous people would be lost if it was shared with another. As for your immortality, in the course of the next few hundred years of thinking, I shall be able to invent it for myself. Even without it, I can become master of the world."

The engineer bowed white and shook with fear. He rose feebly to his feet.

"By leaving, Hyman," he shouted, "I shall leave you to give up this secret of power."

"You have threatened me, you terrible old doctor!" shouted the other. He was about to spring to his feet when Corningham touched a switch. Instantly from beneath the floor Hyman's knees and feet, pinning him helplessly to the chair.

The old man mumbled. "I decided that some time ago for the House of Lords, for power was I thought it might come to be useful when I visited you here today. Hyman, you are in my power. I am a ruthless and vindictive man. I shall not stoop to use any more force than is needed just to render you speechless."

The Immortal Man responded with an insulting smile.

"I am afraid your threats are wasted," he laughed. "The same treatment which ends my cells also to some thousands like a jelly fish or a lobster, also robs them of the power of feeling pain. Torture means nothing to me. Even were you to cut off a limb or plunge me in fire, it would mean nothing to me. No, Corningham, all you can do is to make me immortal, regardless of the cost, because you will not live to enjoy them."

With a labored cry of rage, Dr. Corningham staggered back. His eyes were blinded, and tears dripped his lips. He groined to the verge of an apoplectic fit. With a terrible effort, he regained control of himself, but his eyes still stared madly as he clung to the table in support.

"Come you, Hyman! You shall not live to enjoy the fruits of my invention. In the end, you will die before me." Springing to the atomic machine, he pulled a lever.

The apparatus glowed with fiery light, and he pulled with a rod, carefully avoiding touching the phosphors up. From the apparatus a ray of violet light shot out.

The Professor regarded it horrified.

"Stop! Stop! Have mercy, Corningham!"

The engineer's lips parted in a snarl. "Ah, now you whimper! But I can be hard, too. Watch me carefully, Hyman! It's the last sight you'll look on."

He directed the beam from the rod at the working figure of the Professor. The man's hair stood on end, and his skin glowed with a green light. Then the engineer pressed a switch and the beam from the rod disappeared to blue, while at the same time there was a shrill humming sound.

For a moment the Immortal Man stood very quietly beside the beam. Then his body seemed to become transparent and drift away in a faint smoke.

"The Immortal Man. Ha! Ha! Ha!" cried Corningham.

When next the Dick Wrennman came to see for his employer, he found only Corningham. Young Wrennman's shattered glass of a strange apparition. He was chuckling, to be sure, and his mouth was quivering. He was an idiot.

But of the Immortal Man there was no trace.

CAN IT BE DONE?

IDEAS THAT AWAIT INVENTORS



FIREMAN'S WATER SHIELD HOOD

SURROUNDED BY THIS PROTECTIVE CURTAIN OF WATER POURING THROUGH OPENINGS IN HIS HELMET A FIREMAN COULD PERFORM MANY DANGEROUS MISSIONS SAFELY... CAN IT BE DONE?

Here is another idea that would be valuable. You may have ideas like this. Ideas that will help to make life more safe or more comfortable. Don't keep them under your hat—they may be valuable. Turn to page 323 for an interesting management of how you can make use of your ideas.

Bandits of the Stratosphere

A BATTLESHIP OF THE SKIES waits for the Mail-planes in the Depths of the Stratosphere.



The gun from the sky battleship rattled out its deadly hail, and the wreckage of the mail-plane went down in flames.

★ BATTLESHIP OF THE SKIES

THE big and stratospheric escaped from the upper air and, guided by the radio directional beam, swung down to a perfect landing on the rooftop docks of the London base of the International Postal Board.

The unscheduled twin-motored machine landed in a standstill outside the docks of Hanger 4, and pilot and radio-operator climbed gruffly down to the concrete.

"Big Bill," Brown, crack mail pilot, slipped the oxygen mask from his rugged features and stepped heavily into the control room down on schedule.

The pilot gave in his report to the Controller, glanced at the weather indicator, and was making his way out to the bank house when the man at the control panel stopped him.

"Everything O.K., Big?"

The pilot grinned. "You bet-and why not? Haven't you'd have been about the first to hear if anything had gone wrong."

"Campbell tried to force a gun," "Of course." He hesitated. "You didn't see anything—any other places?"

"Big Bill" shook himself heavily in a chair and looked across at the control operator. "What a killing you, Campbell!" he asked lightly.

Campbell seemed to speak in an incoming mail-plane and then turned back to the pilot, his face puckered with thought. "Perhaps I'm getting jumpy; I don't know. Anyhow, Palmer, of Air Patrol Nine, told me they had been tipped off that they might be happening on the mail route. Said the crew had told them to patrol World Circuit Five, which would cover your route."

Big Bill's jaw protruded.

"What are you getting wind up about?" he demanded. "I haven't crisscrossed in the eight years I've been with the I.P.B. I refuse they're just finding something for the new Air Destroyer to do. I said right at the beginning it was sheer waste of public money to spend a hundred thousand on a fighting plane to patrol the air mail routes."

Campbell indignantly swung to his chair as the high-pitched buzzer on the control panel began to ring. He switched over a switch, and a voice spoke directly from the amplifier.

"I.P.B. Mail plane Stratos calling London control."

"London control."

"Listen. There's a big multi-motored machine trying to sit on my tail. No registration symbols and bristling with guns. Looks like he's trying to get the mail. Better get the Patrol to send a destroyer along—and quick."

"O.K. Keep us tough!" Campbell responded crisply. He held toward the pilot who was crisscrossed beside him. "That a Jimmy Watkins on No. 10. Look! See things are happening."

He switched through to the Air Mail Patrol, the new branch of the International Postal Board recently formed as a safeguard against mail robbery.

He spoke urgently, and the deepening frown on his face showed the waiting pilot that things were going from bad to worse. Campbell flipped over the switch and turned back to Big Bill Brown.

"Sort of thing, it might have expected," he granted disgruntledly. "Spent a hundred thousand on a super fighting plane and its two thousand miles away when it needed—out patrolling Circuit Three."

"What are you doing about it; rushing you're not leaving Watkins to be shot down?"

"The Patrol's in touch with the destroyer, they intend to reach Jimmy's present position in a little over five hours."

"What is his position?" the pilot broke in anxiously.

Campbell glanced at the big clock in front of him.

"Outward bound for Melbourne on World Circuit Five," he answered.

"About eighty miles east of Paris Base."

Big Bill leapt to his feet, sending the chair flying across the room.

A green flash from the window showed his stratosphere still standing outside Hanger 4.

"Tell me to have my bag ready in five minutes," he grunted as he flung out of the door. "And tell Watkins to keep his bag up—I'll be with him in under the hour!"

The door slammed closed behind him.

Campbell glanced the bulky figure of the pilot as he darted across the docks for a gun. The operator instructed the mechanic to refuel the red stratosphere and turn it ready for the take-off. Then he called Watkins.

The pilot of Mail plane Stratos was already half-awake. Campbell could hear the staccato rattle of the compressed-air repeating gun working with the drone of the motor as the pilot's voice came to him. "Looks like they've got me. I'm down to forty thousand and they're firing no lower. Tail assembly is rattled and will carry away any second."

The voice stopped, and for ten horrible seconds the operator thought Watkins had gone down.

Then he came again. "Nearly got me that time. Listen carefully—it's a big grey machine and it's the fastest thing on wings I've ever seen. It came down from above just after I named Paris. Tell Big Bill to hurry."

The voice abruptly died to a whisper. Crouched over the radio, Campbell heard a crash—got up, followed by alarm.

He called Watkins, called again and again. Somewhere, he knew, Mail plane Stratos was spinning down through the stratosphere, dropping like a dead leaf down to the cloud carpet. . . . with the Wireless Keyer of its pilot, still grasping the controls.

Mail-planes Shot from the Skies

He switched off just in time to see Big Bill Benson swinging himself up into the aerial compartment of the red stratosphere.

He tried to signal him to stop, to tell him that it was too late. But, next moment, he heard the screaming whine of the stratospheres and the stratosphere skinned across the concrete and swung up above the Metropolis.

Big Bill Benson, crashed over the controls in the hermetically sealed compartment of the red mail plane, was taking no chances.

In those few minutes before the take-off he had had a compressed air repeating gun mounted in its supports. The barrel swivelled on a cup and ball bearing through the bullet-proof glass of the control cabin.

The roaring white buildings of the Metropolis dropped rapidly behind his tail assembly. The stratospheres plunged through the cloud layer at four thousand feet and crashed steadily upwards to the stratosphere of World Green Five.

Up there in the air he would give the twin motors all they'd take . . . his plane splitting the stratosphere at something in the neighborhood of six hundred miles an hour.

Campbell called him, and Big Bill grinned a grin. "O.K."

At twenty thousand his directional radio told him that he had reached the stratosphere, and the speed of the machine rapidly increased.

The radio operator had already informed him of the death of Watsons, but the pilot disregarded his warning to turn back.

That big grey 'plane was after the mail-planes, no doubt of that. The headsets would follow Mail-plane Sixty-two to the ground and then transfer the bags to their own mail-planes. He would take those machines they couldn't have finished by the time the red stratosphere got there.

Big Bill's radio protested angrily. They'd got Watsons, that was down. They'd got others—did they get the chance. They weren't going to get the chance. . . .

Campbell's radio asked him from his perch. "Calling L.P.R. (Place Name) . . ."

"L.P.R. . . . And A. Campbell!" the pilot bellowed in, bawling all the rules of radio communication.

"You're just passed over Paris. Stand by for signal to descend."

A few minutes later the radio-controlled buzzer on the dash warned Benson that he was on the spot from which Watsons' last message had been received.

He aimed the motors a trifle and swung down. Now that the moment had come he was determined not to be caught napping. He glared at the firing control of the gun, his eyes darted from side to side—above and below—through the glass of the control cabin, searching for the hostile 'plane.

Down to fifty thousand without a sign of another 'plane. Looked like they'd already crashed. Or else they were down below the cloud belt hiding the mail 'plane. If they'd gone he couldn't hope to find them, if they were down below it was no good hovering above.

He thrust the stratosphere into a steep dive and went zooming down to the clouds with his motors revving at peak-point.

The results of his air-speed indicator registered on the seven hundred mark; he could hear the whine of the wind increasing to a shrill across the stratosphere buried into the denser atmosphere of the lower stratosphere.

The machine plunged through the cloud bank, and Big Bill bellowed was a trifle as he saw thick wooded country rushing up to meet him.

He brought the 'plane on to an even level, thrustled down the motors to an even two hundred, the while he searched the ground below, through the glass part in the floor at the forelegs.

He came down to three thousand feet,

and then a whisp of smoke attracted his attention.

He swung the 'plane closer, and one hand groped for the powerful glasses. For a moment he held them to his eyes, then he swung them aside and, with a grunt of appreciation, switched down to the attack.

The search had hung from the burning mail-plane, deliberately fired by the bomber. He had seen one of them coming from the wreckage to the big grey machine in an adjacent glade.

As Big Bill hurried down to within a thousand feet of the forest, the hostile machine started to climb up over the trees.

The pilot groined. Watsons had been right—that was the biggest thing in the air! Its wing span must have been close to five hundred feet, and the humps at regular intervals along the top of the huge single wing were revealed as a battery of motors.

That Benson had other things to think about.

He heeled his own machine straight down at the huge fuselage of the other. With a jerk he pulled out of the dive and skimmed about the top of the foliage. Suddenly, about his finger compassed on the ground, a loud stream of metal edged the hostile plane from tail to nose.

Then he was banking sharply to come round for another attack. Big Bill didn't quite know what he expected to see, probably the big machine plunging back to earth with its controls shot away.

He was doomed to disappointment. As he swung round he saw that the huge grey 'plane had been transformed into an aerial battleship. The solid steel of huge bare guns protruded from hidden ports to wing and fuselage. Forward, just behind the control compartment, a big aircraft gun had swung up on a hydraulic platform. Big Bill groped as he saw the crew in the little enclosure that prevented them from being swept off into space by air. Then a new battle line hung behind, swung round with deadly accuracy, and he wondered how Watsons had stuck up there so long.

It was too late to get away. The huge body of the hostile 'plane batted beneath him. No glancing the grey of our fuselage to his gun sights, and he was pumping lead for all he was worth.

"That's the world's best," said.

He glimpsed a flash of flame as the big gun fired up at him. There was a reverberating thump as the shell exploded just behind his tail.

The mail-plane staggered under the shock of the explosion and, before the pilot could regain control, it was delayed in a shower of bullets from the leading line of anti-aircraft guns.

The bullet-proof glass of the observation post in the rear seat, dim as it was, suffered no attack by a Swedish flying machine. Paranoia of daylight appeared at over the aerial attack of the fuselage. A warning, red-hot pain stabbed in the pilot's shoulder. Then the host shot, and he glimpsed the hostile 'plane charging up behind.

The pain in his shoulder made him feel dizzy, the ground below seemed to be waiting about in a crazy manner. He'd got to get down, Big Bill thought grimly, and quickly.

A glance behind showed the big grey machine disappearing into the clouds above, evidently certain that the pilot of the mail-plane could not have survived that hot of lead.

Big Bill fought to retain control of his senses, swung the 'plane down, glimpsed a strip of undergrowth amongst the trees, and switched off the motors.

The stratosphere hit the ground with a bang that bounced it high in the air, struck again, but more gently. Big Bill, recomposed, gritting his teeth as he applied the shockbrakes; doubly recomposed Campbell taking gently from a long way off. . . .

★ BATTLE OF THE GIANTS

THE new mail-engineer, an destroyer of the Postal Patrol, found Bill Benson unconscious in the control cabin of his 'plane.

When he came round he found that the crew had already deemed the fresh wound to his shoulder, and that the Patrol had arrived too late to catch even a glimpse of the hostile machine.

All they had found was the burnt-out wreckage of Watsons' machine—and the red stratosphere with Bill inside.

A search amongst the charred remains had revealed all that was left of Watsons, and there was no doubt that the sacks of mail had been removed to the big grey machine.

The pilot of the destroyer, had already received a warning to all Air Police to obtain the wanted machine. But, as the pilot couldn't to Bill, it looked as if the hostile plane was capable of outspeeding and outclimbing any pursuing aircraft.

"We'll have to catch him on the bay if we catch him at all," he added.

Big Bill fought the muscles in his shoulder. "What if you team—? If we catch him at all? The fellows know their business, and they're not going to be outwitted with killing Watsons and getting away with a small fortune in registered mails. It's going to be either three or no."

Big Bill noted at the London base for a couple of weeks, during which time nothing was heard of the grey 'plane. An Air Police and Patrol Force reported that the hostile machine appeared to have vanished from the stratosphere.

Until Peters went to his death. . . .

Peters was taking over Bill's post when the latter was waiting for his turn to shoot.

Again they struck on World Green Five, and Peters had no warning. The hostile 'plane must have plunged down from above with motors switched off, plunged down on the unsuspecting mailman and then rolled the mail-plane with it.

Complete silence. "Mail-plane Seven calling. . . . Then a horrible clanking as a bullet scored its way through the pilot's trunk.

The air destroyer was on the scene sixty seconds later, but the time the hostile had waited at even greater speed. The men of the Postal Patrol found the burnt-open sacks of mail scattered around the wrecked machine, but the registered packages were missing—and there was not a sign of the big grey 'plane.

Big Bill reckoned it was time he went into action. He flung the brass hand aside, bent his stiff arm once or twice, and went to see the chief of the London base.

The chief was worried; it was bad enough having his man killed, his machine destroyed—but now the public was beginning to clamor.

Big Bill didn't waste words.

"We've got to stop 'em, we—must quickly. They seem to strike whenever the Postal Patrol men are at least a thousand miles away. That suggests they're getting inside information. They only attack late stratospheres on Green Five. Right!" Big Bill leaned forward across the Chief's desk. "I'm going to be the bait. I'll fly regularly to the west, make a dash for the new fighting stratospheres designed as a mail machine."

"And drop mines the hostile 'plane and sends you to eternity," the Chief finished dully. "They've got a machine that can outfly almost anything; even our new destroyers wouldn't have a bit of its own way if what I've heard is correct."

"Just a moment, sir," Benson broke in. "As I mentioned before, I'm the last—and it's part of my plan that they try to send me down. Just in case there is anybody on the destroyer who is tapping the codes off, I suggest you arrange for a complete change of crew for the next fortnight. The

Duel of the Aerial Battleships

destroyer will be decided in his next shadow on every flight I make, keeping at a distance of not more than thirty miles above and behind. We shall be in direct radio communication with each other. In my designed fighting 'plane I reckon I can hold off the lander until the destroyer arrives—and then we've got 'em where we want 'em."

"And if you don't hold them off?" the Chief asked hastily.

"I'll get what would come to me any way when we take some drastic action," Big Bill replied quickly. "It's my job—and my risk. What about it, sir?"

"Well, try it," the Chief murmured slowly. "But I don't like it."

"The best machine always takes some," the pilot grinned, and with a smart salute went out to make his preparations.

In the utmost secrecy one of the new fighting squadrons was purchased by the International Postal Bureau and went behind the locked doors of Hangar 4 to have its gleaming aluminum parts replaced by the flammable crimson cellulose of the mail-planes.

The latest type of quick-action air reactor was installed, and the radio was adapted for locked communication.

All arrangements were made; the air destroyer had its instruments, and Bill's place at the mail sacks of mail—had heeded a couple of the new aerial ruses in the rear compartment of his stratosphere.

The first flight along World Circuit Five was successful. So was the second—and the third.

It was on the fourth flight that the big fish went at the bait.

Big Bill had almost reassured himself that the big grey 'plane had gone for good. His usual vigilance had relaxed a little, and it was some sixth sense that made him dart a quick glance up through the glass roof of the control cabin. What he saw there brought the blood pounding in his temples.

For a split second he reached paralyzed in horror—watching the score of spinning propellers of the huge 'plane like a rabbit held by the apex of a snout. Then, as he saw the guns breathing from her ports, he sprang to action.

With a single lightning flick of his hand he had flung the stratosphere screaming into a steep dive and had watched on the radio: "Calling air destroyer! Destroy 'plane attacking. Hurry!"

The red 'plane dove ten thousand feet. Five now was the paradox of indecision. Big Bill felt very cool, determined to keep

alive at least until the air destroyer could get on the scene to exact vengeance.

The grey machine was rapidly overhauling him, and Big Bill waited until he judged that the lander were about to open fire, before he flung the nose of his 'plane up and reversed instruments past the swooning reactor.

The maneuver caught the other pilot unawares. Before the guns could be swung round into the new position, the red stratosphere had screamed past them and was a thousand feet above.

Bill turned in time to see the lander 'plane thundering up beneath. He went on climbing until the enemy machine was too close to be hostile.

Quick as thought he plunged his 'plane into a dive, and ducked violently as he heard the shrill whine of the bullets as they whizzed above him.

The lander pilot had evidently realized that this was an ordinary mail 'plane, for this time Bill's sudden dive freed him prepared.

A split second later he had flung the big machine in pursuit, and the banked bottom of bullets against the sky landscape reminded Bill that it was time he changed his course.

The enemy pilot was concentrating on trying to keep on the mail 'plane's tail, otherwise he might have noticed that Bill was going back along Circuit Five. He didn't

and that was why the destroyer came upon them sooner than was anticipated.

The big Postal Patrol 'plane came down from above. For a few seconds it was a case of the runner chased. For the lander pilot, assuming at full throttle in the wake of the little red mail 'plane, was unaware that the air destroyer was about striking its giant tail assembly.

Told the destroyer opened fire . . .

A burst of bullets burst through the after-section of the great battleship and left a dozen battle-dread and dying around the guns. Then the lander pilot left the bait and swung upwards after the bigger fry.

What the Chief had said was right. The destroyer had its heads full. The two guests of the stratosphere died and landed and rolled round each other, endeavoring to blast the enemy to strategy without offering a target for the other's guns.

Big Bill watched it all from above, then—seeing that the destroyer was not leaving it all its own way—he decided that it was time to work back to the fray.

He was plunging down with his fingers ready to compress the discharge lever of his gas when he suddenly remembered the aerial ruses.

He dropped lower.

The lander crew had their eyes fastened to their victim, and—unobserved—Bill dropped into position a dozen feet above the great grey landscape of the pursuing plane.

His hand stabbed forward at the same release apparatus and—simultaneously—he flung his machine aside and up. Kern then he was barely quick enough.

The aerial mine struck the lander 'plane amidships and exploded in a thunder of sound and a tangle of flying fragments.

The red stratosphere was flung over and over like a leaf caught by a gust of wind.

For a moment Bill thought that his 'plane had been put out of control; then he managed to get it back on an even keel. He glanced down.

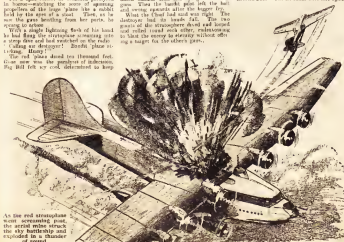
Scarcely fifty was the Postal Patrol 'plane, and—beneath that—spinning over and over down the thousands of feet to the cloud deck, was the two halves of the lander machine, torn asunder by the mine.

The 'plane followed the two sections as they fell, and finally they embedded themselves in the earth.

Big Bill swung his stratosphere in a landing in an adjacent field, leaving a stretch of open ground for the big patrol 'plane. All together with the crew of the destroyer, were quickly gathered round the wrecked machine, but the guns in their fate were an unnecessary precaution.

Those of the lander, who had escaped the hail of shrapnel as the mine exploded must have been instantly killed when the plane hit the ground.

Big Bill Brown went back to his stratosphere and took off for his flight back to the London Base. The air made were safe again.



As the red stratosphere was screaming past, the aerial mine struck the sky battleship and exploded in a thunder of sound.

Revolt

A MOUNTAIN rising foot by foot out of the Earth gave warning of the Revolt of the Stone Men, and out of the underground darkness came a hideous menace.

STANLEY A. REYNOLDS

"This place has come from at least two hundred feet below the surface before I'm much mistaken," he murmured. "Strange . . . Why, what's the matter?"

An excitement from Dennis had interrupted him. Excitement shining in his eyes, the reporter held up a long cylindrical object he had picked up from the debris.

"What do you make of this, Sir Anthony?" he asked.

The two men bent over the strange object. It was made of stone, stone that had been carefully smoothed on the outside. A lid fitted at one end and proved that it was the work of man.

"Heaven!" murmured Sir Anthony. "I wonder how that came to be buried fifty feet down in this strange mountain?"

"Ask me another," laughed Dennis. "Let's have a look inside."

He tapped at the lid, and it came away valiantly at his hand. With a puff of agony, Dennis dropped the cylinder and it rolled down the slope.

The reporter rubbed his nose reflectively.

"Like a bullet in my flesh," he exclaimed, rolling up his sleeve.

A small red patch, as if a few drops of boiling water had spilled on his skin, showed near the elbow. Dennis touched the injured spot gingerly.

"We'll look at that cylinder a little more reflectively," remarked the avenger. "Obviously it burned you, but how I don't pretend to understand. There was no liquid in it that I could see."

He picked up the cylinder, taking great care to keep the open mouth away from his body. "Can he move a few inches."

"If I'm not mistaken, Dennis," he said, excitedly, "this proves conclusively that the ground is being thrown up not by some gigantic animal, but by man. And not primitive man, either! The man who made this cylinder knows some about certain things that we do!"

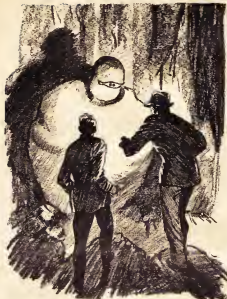
"What do you mean? What is it?"

"To all intents and purposes, the thing is a gun," replied Sir Anthony, "and a gun that in the right hands would be, I imagine, more deadly than anything we used in the last war! Just look at the way it has eaten away that rock!"

Dennis glanced down and gave a whistle of amazement. The rocks in front of the open mouth of the cylinder were clearly but slowly being eaten away, dissolving into thin air.

"Keep out of the way," said Sir Anthony sharply. "The thing is deadly. I should think it is packed with some mineral that is radioactive. It shoots rays instead of bullets, and, as you can see, those rays have the power of disintegrating matter. Lucky for you the pain of the first burst made you drop it. Another few seconds and you would have lost your arm. I don't like to think what would happen to a man with that thing aimed at his heart!"

"What a story!" exclaimed Dennis, the pale of his arm forgotten in his excitement. "It was a good idea of Marshall's to get you to investigate, Sir Anthony. All the other



The two men froze with horror as the light flashed out on the hideous thing before them. It was a rock—a stone that moved . . . and looked!

★ TRAPPED IN MYSTERY MOUND

PRESS the firing key!"

Sir Anthony Rustrum's voice was tense with excitement as he gave the command.

He looked expectantly at the great mountain side, of earth, clay, sand, and rock, that towered a hundred yards away. Buried at the base of that strange mountain, whose sudden appearance and rapid growth had amazed and puzzled the whole world, were two stacks of dynamite.

In a second, the contact of the firing key would blast away a great hole in the mountain side, opening up the secret of the mountain that was like a giant bill snuggled a million times.

There was a dull roar, then a devastating explosion. Earth and rock hurled through the air. Sir Anthony and his companion instinctively threw themselves down.

When they looked up again the dust was beginning to clear, and a gaping cavern had appeared in the side of Mole Mountain. Rapidly they went forward. Sir Anthony seemed to probe the secrets of the strange phenomenon, his companion, Arthur Dennis, anxious to secure an exclusive story for his paper, *The Morning Echo*.

When the first reports of the strange mountain that grew a hundred feet a night first

began to come in, Sir Edler had told him to investigate it.

At first the mountain had been regarded merely as a joke or a superstition, like the Loch Ness Monster. But the early reports of Arthur Dennis, confirming the fact that there really was a mountain in the Scottish Highlands which grew every night, opening up feet of earth and rock, resulted in Sir Anthony Rustrum, the world-famous geologist and anthropologist, being commissioned by the *Echo* to conduct a personal investigation.

"Now we ought to be able to tell whether it is man, beast or earthquake," remarked Sir Anthony as they strode across the interesting ground.

"It would make a grand story if it were man or beast," replied Dennis, "but how could anything bring about hundreds of feet below the surface?"

Sir Anthony smiled.

"It is not much good guessing," he said; "but on the other hand it is merely the matter of man that makes him assume that every form of life must take after himself, eating and breathing in much the same way."

They had reached the still smoking crater, and both men immediately began poking about in the earth and stone for any signs that might provide clues to the secret of the mountain.

Every now and then Sir Anthony gave a grunt as he picked up a piece of stone to

of the STONE MEN

papers are nearly interviewing famous scientists and getting their opinions."

"Getting them guesses, I imagine," laughed Sir Anthony. "I always believe in investigating first and guessing afterwards! More likely to guess right."

Pointing the radio-gun carefully against the rock face, where it could do no harm to them, the two men began searching with a new expression.

It was Dennis who made the first important discovery. In the side of the crater was a narrow but long crack. Peering his eye in the crack, he saw that it widened out into a cave. Sir Anthony came quickly at his call.

"Yes, I believe you're right," said the scientist. "Go back and get the picks. We'll have this open in a few minutes. Quickly, I believe we're really on the track at something."

They had brought picks with them, as well as shovels and other digging tools, and in a few minutes both men were working steadily on the crack.

It widened rapidly, and then suddenly there was a fall of earth. The two men jumped aside as the rocks came rattling down. When the fall had finished the crack had disappeared, and in its place was the mouth of a cavern-like passage.

They peered in, but even the brilliant sun of that exceptionally hot summer could not penetrate more than a few feet. Beyond that was darkness, but it looked as if the passage went far into the mountain.

touches. And if we don't go in soonest else will. I'm just as keen as you to be the first to discover the truth."

"I'm game for anything," replied Dennis. "And I've a gun to see if necessary!"

He laughed.

"Before we start," remarked Sir Anthony, "I warn you that it may be dangerous. Apart from the rules of a landslide covering up the entrance, we may meet . . . well, I don't know. Take luck if you want to."

"And leave you to go on alone?" Dennis's voice was scornful. "My dear Sir Anthony, I've never yet been out on a story that I didn't follow to the bitter end!"

"Lead on, Mac-Duff!" Sir Anthony's team were brought the words on his lips.

For the first few yards the passage sloped steadily downwards. The floor was rough, but there were signs of artlessness, as if the walls and roof had been shaped by men. Sir Anthony pointed steadily upwards, and Dennis saw his torch beam up to the roof, three or four feet above his head. Long slabs of rock, evidently broken by tools, had been placed across to support the earth above.

"Made by men," whispered Dennis, and on the silence of the passage even his whisper sounded like a shout. "What are we going to find, smugglers' secret gold mines, or what?"

"There is your answer," replied Sir Anthony suddenly. He had stopped to look, and was eagerly examining some marks on the floor of the passage.

footprints usually two feet long without toes. And they led directly down the passage!

Dennis felt a cold shiver pass down his back. He was a courageous man, but this was different. Judging from those marks, the things that had made this passage and were using it must be ten or twelve feet high. And the footprints were curiously shaped, showing no toes.

"Going on?" Sir Anthony's lips were set in a grim line as he asked the question.

"For a moment Dennis hesitated. Then the thought of the tremendous story he might get for his paper overcame his momentary doubts.

"Why not?" he asked.

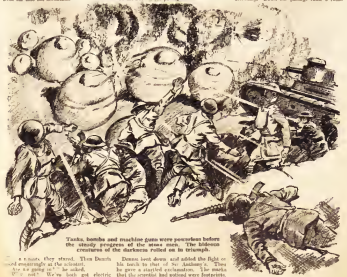
They marched slowly on. Dennis had been counting his paces, and he calculated that they must have come nearly two hundred feet. They must be somewhere near the centre of the mountain, and the gentle sloping of the passage would have brought them down, so to speak, to ground level. Another fifty paces, and Sir Anthony, who was leading, stopped short. Dennis caught up with him.

"What is it?" he asked.

For answer, Sir Anthony pointed his torch beam a yard ahead. The light revealed the edge of a pit, the sides of which sloped downwards almost sheer.

"A narrow escape," remarked Sir Anthony coolly. "Another couple of yards and we should have gone down."

Suddenly both men turned, their ears straining. Down the passage came a rush.



Tanks, bombs and machine guns were powerless before the steady progress of the stone men. The blinding creatures of the darkness rolled on in triumph.

"A shout. They started. Then Dennis moved forward at the scientist.

"Are we going in?" he asked.

"No, not!" We've both got electric

Dennis bent down and added the light on his torch to that of Sir Anthony's. Then he gave a startled exclamation. The marks that the scientist had noticed were footprints,

Hideous Creatures of the Darkness

"He grew louder and louder until, with a roar, it died away. The eyes of the two men met. They instinctively knew what the noise meant. There had been a landslide on the mountain, and the entrance to the passage was blocked up."

"What do we do now?" Dennis hoped that his voice sounded casual.

"Have a look down this passage," replied Sir Anthony, "and then go back, trusting to luck that we can dig ourselves out."

He lay down on his stomach and crawled forward, until his head was over the edge of the passage. Dennis followed his example. Together they stared down the tunnel down the black void.

What happened next, neither Sir Anthony nor Dennis will ever know. For an instant they had a glimpse of gleaming black rock reaching far downwards. Then it seemed as if their torches had been snatched away by giant hands and their heads given a blow with a hammer. Their last thought was that they were falling, falling down the great pit.

★ IN THE POWER OF THE STONE MEN

DENNIS opened his eyes slowly.

It was so dark that he was not sure even on a moment that he had opened his eyes. Suddenly it all came back to him with a rush—the passage in the mountain side, the passage, the strange blow he had been dealt. Very cautiously he put out his hand trying to gauge his surroundings. His hand encountered rock.

Suddenly his fingers lightened on metal. It was his torch! By some lucky chance it had fallen close to him. With the torch in his hand he was happier. He felt for his gun. It was still in its hip-pocket. He hesitated to use his torch. "What if they had struck him just when he was going for his gun?"

Again he went for his hands and, groping vaguely, they touched cloth. He felt cautiously. Yes, it was Sir Anthony's shirt-sleeves.

Even as he felt, the mountain gave a low rumble, and Dennis whispered, "Sir Anthony! You all right?"

"So long that I feel that every bone in my body has been crushed in pain," Sir Anthony replied caustically. He felt himself all sore, then stretched out his legs. "But actually there seems to be nothing broken," he added.

"Still I don't say much," replied Dennis. Sir Anthony grunted assent.

There was a click, and the powerful beams of the torch penetrated the darkness. It played on rock walls. Dennis swung it round. It seemed as if they were in a small tunnel cut out of solid rock. He was looking instinctively for the floor, when he noticed a slight movement of the rock.

Suddenly he froze with horror. What he had taken to be one wall of their prison was a living thing! The colour of the things—Dennis could not give it a name—was so like that of the rock that he had not noticed it until it moved. Now he could see the outlines, the face, with its goggle-like eyes that blinked slowly down every five seconds, monotonously covering it.

The thing was almost invisible, the head protruding as a narrow neck. No feet were to be seen, the whole globe of body resting directly on the ground. In his mind's naked vision Dennis had seen nothing so terrible as this thing.

The horror of it paralyzed him, so that his legs were nerveless and could not swing off the rock. He had to watch fascinated, as the thing raised the great lid covering its entire face. Two pale eyes stared at him and Dennis, in spite of himself, felt a tremendous impulse to get up and walk towards it. He glanced at Sir Anthony.

The scientist was also staring at it fascinated.

"What is it?" gasped Dennis, "are we still dreaming?"

Sir Anthony turned towards him with a forced smile.

"Very interesting," he said. "Strange things are coming things take under their invisible forms of evolution and movement. But for chance, my dear Dennis, you and I would look like that. And no doubt when we examined ourselves in the glass we should find that we were exceedingly handsome fellows."

"Do you think he can hear us?"

"I don't say eyes or ears. But I have so repeatedly felt that I must get up and walk towards it that I am beginning to believe he talks by telepathy. In which case he probably understands every word we are saying."

"But how could a subterranean English?"

"Telepathy is an unscientific hypothesis. It is based on a hypothesis by intuition and those concepts no words. Just at the moment, the thing is trying to get up and walk towards him, only he seems to be saying 'no' instead of 'walk.' If he does not do it, he'll probably come for us. Look out, here he comes!"

The two men watched in astonishment as the thing began to move. The head disappeared as it sank under it. It was completely hidden in the body. The long arms folded into the armpits, and the thing began to roll towards the two men.

Dennis struggled to his feet, and impulsively whipped out his revolver. He fired, aiming right at the centre of the globe. As the distance he could not see. But the thing took no notice, and continued to roll steadily towards him.

In a flurry of fear he fired that afternoon at the advancing monster with the magazine of his gun was empty. The monster took no notice, but reaching Dennis, advanced on him, aimed his head and proceeded towards the entrance of the chamber.

"I hit him every time!" exclaimed Dennis. "And he took no notice either that of me made of stone!"

"He's made of something very near to stone," replied Sir Anthony grimly. "His flesh is so tough that the bullets have no effect. I saw them dropping distanced to the floor."

The chamber opened up to a passage, and the two men were propelled down it, helped only by the ray of Dennis's torch. They passed other things, monsters resembling exactly that which had taken charge of them. One or two of these monsters raised their heads as their heads and directed their eyes towards the strangers, but no sound was uttered.

"How on earth can they see us in this pit's darkness?" asked Dennis.

"Extra-sensory rays," Sir Anthony was thoughtful. "The retina of the human eye responds only to the wavelengths lying in the white light band. Above and below this band lie other wavelengths. There is no reason why they should not be used for vision by other eyes. It seems to me that, lying deep in the earth in perfect darkness for centuries, these strange creatures have learned to see by means of some similar type of radiation. It is obvious that they do not require light as we know it to see the things about them."

"And listening?" asked Dennis. "How do they manage that? This or two of the specimens we have passed seem to have understood what this thing said, yet he never uttered a sound!"

"Intelligence," replied Sir Anthony shortly. "It is an elementary school up above of mine. I call it a stone wall. It is the stone wall. These strange things use it as the normal sense of communication. I think our captives understand every word we say, or rather everything we think. We can only get occasional glimpses of what he is thinking be-

cause our telepathic powers are not so highly developed."

They walked on in silence for perhaps a hundred yards. Very slowly their eyes were becoming accustomed to the darkness, and even without the aid of the torch they could walk slowly.

The passage suddenly enlarged, and by the aid of the torch they knew the way to a large chamber. Dennis saw his torch towards the roof and they found the cavern must be a hundred feet high, cut out of the solid rock, or was away by centuries of steady dripping of some underground stream.

Their torches took them to the centre of the hall and they saw the entrance to the passage.

"What are our chances of getting out?"

It was Dennis who asked the question.

"Doubtless five, I should think, but I wouldn't have minded this for a hundred years of life above!" Sir Anthony's voice was subdued but cheerful. "You realize what it all means? If we can get these stone men to talk, I think we shall find they are the descendants of some tribe of early man that got buried in an earthquake, or somehow entombed in these caverns. Instead of going up without a fight, these men started adapting themselves to the heat, the pressure, and the lack of oxygen. It is really remarkable that we can live down here, and I think we should have been dead long ago except for that passage which is our lifeline. He is coming down it, and also it is cooling the place a bit."

"It's all very interesting," grumbled Dennis, "but what's the good of a story unless I can get it through to my paper?"

"Look, isn't there's dozens of these creatures?"

Sir Anthony was not exaggerating. From half a dozen passages smaller ones were called. Every one was exactly like another. Dennis whispered a comment that they seemed not to vary in the slightest even as regards their height, and Sir Anthony explained that it was because of the constant resistance to air circulation, and the fact that the air in contact with the rock is cooled.

"No differences in weather, climate, or temperature to cause variations," he said. "Very interesting!"

With an anticlimax that showed that good discipline was maintained, the stone men ranged themselves in rows. Two or three of the strange creatures stood apart, and these the two men took to be the leaders, although they were no distinguishable mark. In a few minutes the large cavern was filled, the stone men forming a hollow square with the two explorers and their captives in the centre.

A deadly silence reigned in the cave.

"They're talking," whispered Sir Anthony, "but not saying a word! I hate a feeling like this, however, so. Yes, the leader is asking me where we came from."

Actually the leader had not said a word. He had turned towards Sir Anthony, and it was the power of his thoughts which the scientist had perceived. He opened his mouth in answer, then realizing the futility of words, closed it again.

"We came from above, from the surface," he thought very hard. The leader seemed to understand, for immediately another question came shooting into Sir Anthony's brain.

"How many live up there?"

Sir Anthony was puzzled for a moment. There he foundered and could not "answer" as he had said and compared up a picture of scores of men stretching out after another into the distance. Again the leader of the stone men seemed to understand. His next question was phrased with emphasis. Sir Anthony read it as "Are you trying to escape by telling us lies?"

However hard he tried, Sir Anthony could not get the stone men to believe he was speaking the truth. The strange creatures were so cunning for several minutes without a sound being uttered.

To every statement about the millions above the leader replied, "But there are only a thousand men in the world!" He had no

idea that allows his will enter world of crime and passages was another, many times bigger and much more thickly populated.

In his turn Sir Anthony asked the leader with questions. Sometimes the stone man could not follow him. Any question relating to talking, for instance, drew a blank. With the stone man, talking and thinking were the same thing.

Sir Anthony learned that many of his guesses had been right—that the stone men are by whistens of a lower wave length than white light. Their eyes were insensitive to the beam of Deanna's torch. He learned that they derived all their power, their food, and even a certain amount of their oxygen from the radio about them. The radio-active rocks were used for power and for levitating above other rocks into their constituent elements and then blending them into the re-created form.

"Remarkable!" Sir Anthony exclaimed to Deanna. "Here are these men, cut off from what we call the world for countless centuries, existing along completely different lines. And yet in many ways they are similar to us. What would some of our modern scientists give for their knowledge!"

"You must be taken to the Chief!" The leader of the stone men ended the message to Sir Anthony, and almost immediately the two men found themselves being led off.

Resistance was useless. The stone men's skin was tough, and both the captives felt that there would fail unaided. They had an alternative but to follow obediently whenever they were led.

"What's the Chief?" whispered Deanna. Much of the telepathic conversation had been lost in fog. His brain, apparently, was not so sensitive to telepathic messages as that of Sir Anthony.

"Judging by their thoughts he is a person of extreme importance, almost a god. But we shall know in a minute."

The procession halted for a few seconds, and then Deanna and Sir Anthony were ushered into a chamber which, while smaller than the vast assembly hall they had left was of considerable size.

Along the sides were rows upon rows of strange apparatus, and machinery. It bore no resemblance to anything the two men had seen on earth, but they guessed that it was scientific apparatus of some kind. A few men were busy with some of the apparatus as they entered. He looked up, then, toward the Chief. Slowly, he told the other stone men to leave the chamber.

For a minute he gazed at Sir Anthony and Deanna. Then he stretched out one of his arms and felt them. He seemed surprised at the softness of their flesh.

"We're alone with one of them. Shall we make a light and home it?" whispered Deanna.

Before Sir Anthony could reply, the stone man had shut some of his thoughts.

"You are weak and foolish," he seemed to say. "You could not comprehend me, search into the domain of my sciences who walk outside this chamber. Now answer my question."

Deanna got the message vaguely and looked at Sir Anthony, who nodded. Many thoughts in their heads were being read by this man. They remained him more clearly. Except that his head was considerably larger than those of the other stone men he resembled them in every particular.

"Yes!" The Chief was reading them another message by that strange, scanning, peaceful power which he seemed to have developed even more highly than the other stone men. "I look the same. But I have a bigger brain. I have thought out everything. All this machinery, the very food they consume, it is due to my brain. With me you they would be lost. That is why they have made me their god. But enough of this. Answer my question."



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★ THE ICE THAT BURNED

Fell the last half hour he played them with

"How had they got there?" When Sir Anthony told him of the mountain story, growing every day, the Chief gave what amounted to a smile. "Yes, that was in fact some of my ideas. Theoretical calculations had led me to suppose that there might be another world above. I was anxious to find it, so I set a hundred men travelling with radium guns. I am glad to find they had reached it since this other world was that my calculations were correct. But if I had known that this other world was peopled by such strange, foolish creatures, I should not have troubled."

Suddenly an evil look came into the stone man's eyes. He nodded as if to himself, then asked three more questions, questions that urged him onward to find answers. Then he smiled again.

"Yes, this world would be worth conquering. First had, ultra-violet beams without having to work for them, many are—my people could do it. They have already a certain stage of civilization, but if they could give more time to their brains and less to their muscles, this world too are conquerable."

Sir Anthony's laugh brought him up short. "Conquer the world? With a thousand men?" The stone man's concept was amazing. "In thought it is reasonable, scientific knowledge might partly excuse it. The Chief took no notice of Sir Anthony's laugh, as indeed he continued it.

"We will go up to the surface tonight," he said. "From what you tell me it is not always dark in this new world you call the

surface. My people think best in the dark. You shall be our guides. We will take what we want, return here, and all up the holes we have made again so that we shall not be continuously in contact with your soft men."

"And we shall be allowed to go?" It was Deanna who asked the question. From before of being able to write his story goes in his mind.

The Chief's answer shocked them.

"I shall need you," he said, "to experiment again. I believe that if I can give you pieces I might discover something that would be useful in the evolution of our race. We live for evolution. Even the slightest new knowledge would be useful."

The two men groped to answer. They were to be led to the surface, to be made to act as guides for some expedition, and three longish look before to suffer strangulation at the hands of this monster! The Chief apparently noticed their horror.

"You gradually do not understand that in the course of years all things are possible, and even desirable." He shut against anyone of his own people would not flattered to submit to vivisection at his hands. But enough. It must now be during the period which you call night, when there is darkness on the surface. We will go up."

Along the passages they went, stone men before and behind. Each of the stone men gave carried a radium gun similar to that which Deanna had found on the side of the mountain. The two men shuddered at the thought of what would happen if the stone men started using those terrible weapons.

Escape! We must escape! The words kept coming through the heads of the two men. Unless they could



Here's a Scoop

Cutting England in Two?

As soon as money begins to circulate more freely, and State aid in more ample quantities, the Government will be invited to consider a scheme to cut England into two great islands by means of a waterway across the centre.

It is planned to take the River Nene, which runs into the Wash, and make it navigable from the Wash to Northampton. There it will connect with Britain's great inland canal systems, such as the Grand Junction Canal, and will allow water traffic to go westwards to the Severn estuary, northwards to Manchester or southwards to the Thames and London.

The promoters have been offered enough water traffic for their new water road to justify the cost of two million pounds.

Painted Music

THE composer of the future may not need to depend on an orchestra or a choir in order to hear his new composition, for he can write his new work straight into sound picture form with the help of a strip of paper and a paint brush.

The secret of this new scientific marvel is simply the principle of talking-picture reproduction taken a step further. Everyone knows that the "sound" part of a talkie is represented as a wiggling line which is photographed on the finished film alongside the visual strip.

A scientist, seeing how a piece of music, as played by an orchestra, was reduced to a number of wavy lines on this talking strip before reproductions, decided he would start by painting music strips with a brush—found his strip provided first-class music which was through the reproducing apparatus.

Painted music!

Science Tackles the Amazon

AEROPLANES, boats, machine-guns, are part of the battery of equipment which is to be used by an expedition which hopes to penetrate right to the source of the River Amazon.

Two Spaniards are organizing the expedition. It will cost £500,000 and will be away two years in its attempt to overcome the world's most dangerous river.

SCOOPS



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The party will number forty-five, and will include eight air and naval officers in addition to nurses, cameramen, radio operators and doctors.

They will have to travel through the territory of numerous head-hunting tribes, and are determined to be prepared for anything.

Their Headquarters will be a 1,000-ton flat-bottomed boat which will have three separate radio stations in operation all the time they are away.

The doctors will have the task of fighting off fevers of that region, which, so far, have been beyond the efforts of medical men.

Then there will be the task of collecting native persons for study—and a complete collection of skeletons is being taken, perhaps in case of accidents.

Three fast motor-boats will be on board the science ship, and for defence purposes machine-guns and machine-guns are being carried.

The expedition proper will begin when the ship is 2,000 miles up river. The planes will take-off and make aerial surveys of the country.

A descent in these forests will mean certain death.

So the organizers of the expedition are at present in this country taking delivery of their machines, planes they will have to trust with their lives.

They are Dr. Harland's-Arthur.

Snowstorm of Gas

CARBON DIOXIDE, mentioned in this week's story "Revels of the House Men," is well known as the kindly agent that puts the process into grape-juice. Last summer it played a remarkable practical joke. At Krynau, the popular resort on the Continent.

An ad well near the town blew a large quantity of the gas high into the air. Carbon dioxide is heavier than air, so it fell rapidly, changing as it did so into snow. In a short time the weathering town, with its prepping, holiday makers, was transformed into a scene from a Christmas card; everything lay under a thick mantle of white.

Cold and changing pressure had added the gas.

Invention—or Curio?

M. J. HENRY FORD, the motor millionaire, has had the saying "There's nothing new under the sun" brought vigorously to his notice.

He is reported to have examined the ordinary watch, saying it had been improved by very few time-saving devices since it was first invented. Then he went on to ask why there was not a self-winding watch.

Now he is being inundated by accounts of keyless watches.

One correspondent declares that right back in 1661 an English Margate man was granted a patent to make watches and clocks that had neither string, chain, nor other kind of winding up.

There were two instances of keyless watches between then and the time of Napoleon, who was supposed to have owned a watch which was wound on the principle of a pelicanet, which operates by the motion of walking. An English self-winding watch is now on the market.

A History Book of Patents would make interesting reading.

How Old is the Earth?

FORTH many years the Earth's age has been a matter of controversy between the world's scientists, but now they are nearly all agreed that it lies between 1,000,000,000 and 2,000,000,000 years.

Thus Science was arrived at by the use of "clocks" that mark time in thousands of years. The key to the situation lies in the disintegration of the radio-active metals. Radium loses helium gas and deteriorates into Radon which, by several similar processes, finally becomes lead. It takes 1,580 years for the radium in a particular specimen to be reduced by half, but Uranium, the heaviest element, being heavier than Radium, takes 4,500,000,000 years to lose fifty per cent. of its original identity. Here then we have the hour hand of the "clock."

Uranium can be found in many kinds of rocks, and samples taken from the oldest rocks known show that their lead content is an age of over 1,300,000,000 years. This result is confirmed also by reference to rocks containing Thorium, another of the radio-active group, which is used in the manufacture of gas mantles.

It is interesting to note that the lead left from disintegrating Radium, although apparently identical with ordinary uranium or gas, is actually different in that it has no electric moving force of its own and is, therefore, known as an inactive form of the element.

Share-Buying at Speed

THE merchant takes full advantage of speedy means of communication. Here is an instance, reported in the *London Evening News*.

In the West End of London there was a man who wanted to buy a number of shares on distant Wall Street. Two and a half minutes remained before a bell would ring in the American market, after which time no dealing is permitted.

He handed in his order to a brokerage firm's office in Piccadilly with three two and a half minutes to spare—and hoped for the best.

First the order was written on a teleprinter at the office and sent off to the firm's office in the City. Here it was coded. Then the coded message was "piped" to a cable office, which flashed the message across the Atlantic to the New York home of the brokerage company.

There it was decoded and the message telephoned to the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, where the shares had to be bought.

Before the fateful bell could have rung in New York, the buyer in London heard that his order had been carried out.

Master

In a Gigantic Space
the Earth and the
Fights the Terro

great towering Moon feet, its
lights gleamed in the darkness
of the sky.

A swarm of the Moonmen
poured past him, not noticing
the young peer in their eagerness
to escape. All was confusion and
dash.

And it was at
that moment
that Lord Algy
saw Dr. Myer,
the Master of the
Moon.

The magnetic anchor leaps
from its coiled path straight
at the passing ship
—caught and held here—
"Get you!" yelled Lord
Algy.

★ MOON ARMADA IN RETREAT

THE tank raced forward over level
ground. The Moon feet being
withdrawn was a remarkable sight. At its
bow it was a streaming mass of metal, like
quicksilver. The other foot miles away was
diminished.

Captain Nick ordered another salvo, and
the foot was replying as the tank advanced
to within deadly range. Again the Moonmen
poured out with their weird liquid fire and
ray guns to the attack, but they were no
match for the handful of British troops who,
armed with their strange cylinders, charged
upon them.

It was ghastly warfare. Invasion by the
terrible forces from the Moon.

Dr. Myer, self-styled Master of the
Moon, had landed on Salisbury Plain with
mighty jets and numerous ray guns.
Wilderness Moonmen had been disgorged from
lunar fighting towers, and machines beyond
the ken of man had been utilized in the great
assault from the Moon.

But it had been checked by Captain
Nick Chance, the fighting space adventurer,
and even now, in a tank guided by a gas-
turbine ray, he was bringing destruction to
the Moon Armada.

In the tank with his two spare officers,
Lord Algy and Lord Algy and Salisbury Plain
Pike, he was fighting the moonmen with
deadly smoke salvo Moon metal.

The other Moonmen were soon in retreat,
racing madly for the other towering Moon
foot.

Captain Nick, his face grim and hard,
turned the tank after them.

The remaining Moon tower seemed
strangely silent, no ray flashes coming from
its many embrasures. But, then, so was the
advancing tank.

"We're running short of ammunition,"
gritted the space-captain. "But so is the
Master of the Moon. That other tower's

silent, you see. The rays
take a tremendous amount
of generating fuel and ex-
pend it too rapidly. It's
the same with the stuff we're
using."

Nevertheless the tank
charged upon the other Moon
tower.

It seemed that the Master
of the Moon's foot was dead.
British troops armed with
guns and bayonets were
rushing upon the Moonmen
and overhauling them.

Unless the Master of the
Moon could produce reserves
of the deadly rays and liquid fire, and bring
that other Moon tower into action his cause
appeared lost.

Captain Nick was perplexed. He knew
that the floating aerial high above in the
stratosphere contained a power station that
he'd generated enough of this deadly force to
substitute the world's civilization.

He did not know that someone above was
watching the power, holding back the
valuable energy that could destroy the world.
That was why the other tower was out of
action.

The space station now a pitted battle
between the Moonmen and the British troops
on the ground below the remaining Moon
tower.

The silver-colored men from the
Moon were in retreat, but the British were
intent upon cutting off the escape of as many
as possible.

The tank halted, and Captain Nick, Lord
Algy and Lord Pike, in their steel helmets,
and armed with revolvers pointed out.

The tank's supplies were exhausted, and
they could do no more useful work so it
The battle was joined.

Lord Algy, crouching and shooting his way
through the rubble, found himself near the

The hounded scientist stood at the entrance
to the fork, furiously gasping. His ad-
visers, five or six Moonmen, were around
him, and from their demeanor it was
evident that they were advancing retreat.

The Master of the Moon seemed ready to
take their advice, too. He was glibly as
space war and he knew, evidently prepared
to retreat into the thin air above. He made a
last gesture of furious desperation, and
turned. Lord Algy, watching closely, saw
the Master of the Moon disappear, and
waited with his hand on his sword.

Then suddenly he gave a gasp of dismay.
—Dash it, he's getting away from me!

Staring upwards, he saw a moon-train
emerge from an opening high in the tower,
and go swooning up into the black heights
above.

The moon-train was brilliantly lighted, and
Lord Algy distinctly saw the Master of the
Moon within.

In a flash he understood. The Master of
the Moon had given up the battle on land,
and was in retreat.

His mind was made up.

The young peer ran forward swiftly, his
revolver in his hand. He was aflame with
anger, and it enervated all instincts of

of the MOON

ie Hovering between
n a British Scientist
the Lunar Globe

caption. Captain Nick had said that the World would not be safe until the Master of the Moon's power was finally crushed. And he was occupying

Lord Algie did not hesitate. His answer lay clear before him. He had got to it now.

★ AN ENGINEER SAVES THE WORLD

LORD ALGERNON TYFORD followed the sinister scientist to the moon and



up to his grief floating around in the atmosphere.

He heard the low monotone bang of the Master of the Moon, and that put him on the alert of his quarry.

The young, peer, clad in space suit and goggle helmet, turned a corner, and at last found, feeling his scalp tingle.

In his great workshop, where strange machines thrummed and turned warily, stood the Master of the Moon, with Match, his thin, scarred engineer hovering before him.

There was a grin on the bearded lips of the scientist, but it was belied by the fume of anger in his eyes. He laughed softly, portly, and the men before him cowered as if he had been lashed with a whip.

Match, the engineer, was a master of his trade, which had to do with these gleaming, smug machines. But he was a pitiful specimen of humanity.

The Master of the Moon had held him under his thumb for many years, and Match knew all about his terrible designs to invade and subdue the Earth. They filled him with fear and horror, but he had to do as he was bidden to thwart the Master of the Moon.

Net well now . . .

Match had seen the forces of the Moon smashed on Midway Island beneath him; he had seen one of the mighty Moon towers crumple up under Captain Nick's devastating fire, and he had taken a desperate leap of his.

He had deliberately withheld power from the second tower—dark power which supplied the ray guns and the protective web in the last battle. He had taken a hand in the game, hoping for victory for the defenders of the Earth.

And now the Master of the Moon had retreated in his open-house above the clouds, and Match was being called to account.

"No, you dog," growled the Master of the Moon softly, "you neglected to turn on the switches, ah? All this power leaked here in the workshop, and at the critical moment it is held up. My Moon covers fall to the front, owing to lack of power, power which you have withheld."

There was something terrible in his soft, deliberate speech. Match flinched from his black eyes. Beneath his outward calm his rage was staggering, dreadful. And Match would under it, he went down on his hands and knees.

Master, he faltered desperately. I kept the energy on as long as I dared—up to the moment that you placed upon it, I believed—

"What, if you mean, dog?" growled the bearded scientist. "The reserves?"

Master," growled Match, fear running loose in his veins. "You have told me repeatedly to hold in reserve power to disintegrate the Earth, to blow it into smithereens should your attack fail. I obeyed those instructions. I held this power in reserve."

Match spoke in absolute desperation to save his own miserable life.

Yet he shuddered as he realized the idea he had put into the Master of the Moon's mind.

"Ah, yes," said the Master of the Moon softly. "You did right after all, Match. Now, upon the invasion from the Moon has failed, I will execute finally on Earth. I will bring about the end of the world."

And Lord Algie, Tyford, watching from around the corner in the spacelane, could not fail to appreciate the significance of what came next.

"That coil of copper wire will do the trick," glared the Master of the Moon, "coasting over in a great drum of gleaming copper wire." "It is a marvelous conductor of the force. You were right, Match, right to keep reserves of the power in hand. The world has opened and reported now—see I propose to make an end of it."

Now, growling as he bent down and ground a release button that speed a ray in the steel floor of the spacelane. Through this he projected the kink end of the copper wire, and then, jerking erect, he continued to unroll the great drum. A single pressure on a button set it revolving softly, and the copper wire dropped through with almost regular regularity.

"Even if there is not enough wire to reach the ground, the discharge will enter the Earth's atmosphere," he growled softly. "That will be sufficient. The power flows low in sufficient to disintegrate the whole world."

"The Algie shivered; then he pulled himself together.

"Get to stop this," he murmured, gripping his revolver.

"The time is ripe," went on the Master

of the Moon. "In a little while the astronomers on other worlds will wonder what has become of the terrestrial globe, and they will marvel, for they will see signs of burning gases which were once the world. They will see a new nebula in the heavens."

It was too much for Lord Algie. With a look of horror on his face, he took a step forward as if to interfere.

But then he heard a sound behind him, and turning he saw to his amazement that Captain Nick and Sam Pike were behind him, also in space suits.

They had followed him up into the floating aerial in the moon-train. The Master of the Moon had left a strong guard of Moon-men to cover his retreat, but these had become demoralized and had fled, and so Captain Nick and Sam Pike had got through into the floating fort with unobscured ease.

Captain Nick restrained Lord Algie with a gesture. The glowing scientist himself was in a cold, savage rage, but throughout he kept steadfastly as true to his great object, to save the world from disaster.

The beam of the earthy surrounding disc of copper wire raised at that, and the Master of the Moon cried in a voice that expressed the strange weakness in his workshop.

"A few moments from now," he said softly, "the terrestrial globe will receive the first shock of the power that will cause it to vibrate and become a molten mass, vanishing in space. We will rise to the Moon; you and I, Match, and we shall be the disciples left to witness the world's destruction. Ah that will be a sight! Are you ready, Matchmen?"

He was about to turn away the way that would send his dreadful currents pouring down to Earth, when a voice behind him, still as steel,

"No, Match, you will shudder me, please, by getting up your hands—at once!"

The Master of the Moon spun round.

"You—" he staggered, and a light of terror flared in his black eyes.

"Speak, you mad fool!" cried Captain Nick, a flash of anger. "Put up your hands! If you think that infernal war-bomb—"

Hardly had the words from Captain Nick's revolver, the Master of the Moon made to grasp the lever.

Then there was through the great machine room a quivering cry of rage, and Match, the engineer, laid full upon his. Match had made the great decision.

Whatever else he had done, he had, at least, saved the world at that moment.

And he seemed indeed with the strength of ten men. They struggled to and fro desperately.

Then, with a roar, about from the Martin, the two tumbled over and crashed to the floor. The Master of the Moon on top. He remained motionless for long first again, bearing Match lying still, and made a dash for escape.

Lord Algie and Sam Pike tried to intercept him. But the Master of the Moon knew the spacelane better than they did, sliding them, he dashed out through one of the doors.

"After him!" cried Captain Nick. "He cannot escape! He can do all manner of mischief in this place."

They followed the Master of the Moon through a maze of corridors, their flashlights throwing a weird light as they ran. But it was of no avail. They reached his end at a passage at last and came out into a empty hall, open to the stars and similar to that of the moon-train terminus.

The light that met their eyes gave them to pull up short. Sam Pike gave an exclamation of alarm.

Each man's too late. He's escaped to the Algie's."

With a sense of disappointment and failure they watched their own observatory ship lifting out of the vast dark hall.

They knew it as their own ship by its

Annihilating the Moonmen Invaders

design. *Fierdently* the Master of the Moon had made repairs and read the ship.

As it moved out, beaming rays in the glimmer, one of the port window shattered and spew, and they had a glimpse of the bearded and distorted face of Dr. Merib, Master of the Moon, glaring at them. Then it was gone, and the space ship rapidly assumed a cone shape as it slid into space.

"Get gone!" said Lord Algy with feeling. "I wish I could land and go at the highest life of Mutch. I'd like to see his eyes, as he goes," said Captain Nick, his eyes glaring. And while he is at Mutch he is powerful for harm. The world will have no peace until the Master of the Moon is under restraint. Gaaa!"

They were a silent and strongly subdued procession as they went back along the winding corridor. They were not out for a hint of help. Mutch, who walked out from one of the great lifts, and they were swiftly subdued and driven back by the stern demeanor of the three armed adventurers.

Indeed, the Moonmen seemed to realize that the game was up and their eyes were lost. Their attitude was one of spineless surrender. In the moon-out terrace hundreds of them herded together in lines.

After driving them back, Captain Nick took the great aerial doors and put up the heavy bars. They made a survey of the flowing Moonmen, suppressing the Moonmen in the halls, wherever they came upon them, by hurling up the doors.

They were in virtual command of the flowing Moon crowd.

Each occupied with his own thoughts, they entered the machinery hall, and found Mutch leaning on the floor. Captain Nick looked quickly about of his own occupation and bent over him.

"No loose loaves," he pronounced after he had examined the man. "See, he's coming round."

The engineer's eyeballs flickered open, and he started for a moment.

"Did I throttle him?" he growled.

Captain Nick proceeded to explain the situation.

Down below the world was still divided by the armed hosts from the Moon, and was battling for its very existence. Even yet the Master of the Moon might rally his forces, though he had lost command of the great floating power house, which was obviously the key to the whole situation.

"Get!" Mutch looked himself up on one elbow. "Where do we catch them now with this power—we can wipe them out of existence."

Explicitly he explained his plan. The Moon hosts were undoubtedly in confusion down on Sublunary Plane. Yet, what on Earth, they seemed a menace. But the power house was capable of destroying all evidence of them, capable of wiping them out of existence.

But through his power transmission cables to the Moon itself, the power would flow into the channels the Master of the Moon had designed. But if a sufficient flow went out, down that super wire conductor, it would wipe out everything within a required radius.

And Mutch could gauge the radius. He could transmit just as much or as little of that power as he desired, and limit everything off the face of the Earth within a given distance.

Ecstatically Captain Nick and his companions listened to his suggestions.

The one great barrier to the plan, as Captain Nick pointed out, was the loss of life that might be incurred by the people of Earth within the radius of the terrific electric field that would be created.

But Mutch soon got over that objection. He pointed out that there was nothing in the hall, and that they could get into communication with those in command of the Riffra forces, explain their plight and have all troops removed from the danger zone.

Once he had accepted it, Captain Nick

Chance secured while hurriedly into the scheme. He got busy at the radio, transmitting messages and receiving them from the Earth. The plan was rapidly taken up by those in authority.

Mutch's admissions of the time to be destroyed by the power were not again checked and agreed to by the British general, and a strategic withdrawal of British troops was suggested.

The authorities believed that there would be no peace on Earth again until every vestige of the Moon existence was wiped out.

Although other cities had been destroyed from the sky, the actual Moon forces had landed on Sublunary Plane only. Sublunary Plane is vast, and Mutch calculated that though lives would be blasted out of existence and cottages destroyed, their actual harm would be done only to the Moon forces remaining on Earth.

All these arguments took time. And it was a period of anxious waiting for all. Down below the British guns were concentrated in keeping the Moon forces within the area prescribed. It was a ticklish operation, but at last all was ready.

All this time Mutch had been busy at his machines. Lord Algy and Sam Pike had been keeping an anxious watch for any sign of the Moon. Mutch of the Moon was felt by the little party of space adventurers that he was holding himself.

His space ship, the *Chavron*, had completely disappeared, and with it had gone the rest of the Moon fleet. The mighty space-dome alone remained hovering in the stratosphere, with the weakened forces of the Moon for hosts.

Mutch had explained to Captain Nick, Lord Algy and Sam Pike that this vast floating power house, possessed only electrical energy. It had no explosive and repulsive engines, and therefore in effect could not land either on the Earth or the Moon, except by falling with a terrific crash.

The Master of the Moon had never intended the floating world to land. Its electric blast against took it off from the Moon and it was now in space.

By shutting off the electrical energy, of course, the gigantic space-dome could be made to fall upon the nearest body—in this case the Earth. But it would mean destruction for the 'dome and death for all those within.

The thought that they might never land on the Earth again struck a chill into the hearts of the space adventurers. They had searched and found no other space ship in the great hanger of the 'dome. The Master of the Moon had escaped in the *Chavron*, the only one remaining. And that he was brooding some fresh tricked all of them felt sure.

But all thoughts of their plight on the floating station, packed with imprisoned Moon men as it was, were cast on the tremendous problem before them. The problem of ridding the Earth of the Terror that still ruled below.

The preparations for delivering that terrific short circuit down on to the Earth seemed interminable, but at last the stream of messages came and from the floating world seemed all was ready for the great experiment. A huge blast fell upon the space adventurers in the great machinery hall of the floating world.

Mutch, his face as dark and ugly as ever, looked round from his platform amidst the humming, wickily chattering machines.

"They're going to give just the right current," he said calmly. "Do I or do you pass the master plan?"

"Yes," cried Captain Nick, his lips and head jutting out, and his blue eyes narrowed in shining slits.

For reply Mutch bent to his engine; one arm threw over a lever, the other pressed the power house. It was a dramatic moment, packed tight with tension, and the three space adventurers waited, their nerves taut.

A second indescribable suddenly filled them

as it was a sound as of raging typhoons, shrieking winds. It filled their ears in several seconds and held them pale faced, gripped with terror.

All but Captain Nick crossed over to the main-room and commenced to turn the knobs.

"Let's see what's happening down below," he grinned.

A noise beyond all imagination filled the screen. There was Sublunary Plane, as it had been the part of it held by the invading Moonmen. And it was like looking down from the height of the Alps upon an electric storm raging in a valley below.

Jagged lightning crossed and re-crossed in the darkness, lighting up the wred scene of destruction. Alternately there came blinding sheets of light. The heavily smoking space adventurers saw the mighty Moon fleet reduced to smoldering ruins, they saw towers rising as their blast, others no longer masses as if they had been poured from the cradle of a smoldering factory.

The moonmen from the Moon were smashed, the staggering engines of war fairly and completely demolished.

But yet another and graver danger threatened.

It was the danger from the Moon itself, which had been pulled out of its orbit by the amazing meddling of the Master of the Moon with its vast Astronomers on Earth. Mutch had that eventually the Moon might collide with the Earth. Already irreparable damage in the way of earthquakes and tidal waves had been done.

Instant radio messages were sent up to Captain Nick. In effect all asked the same question: "What was to be done?"

The famous space adventurer tapped at his board, his face grim and set.

"Our work is not yet done," he growled.

"And yet, here we are, we can't land on Earth—and we can't land on the Moon. Yet while the Master of the Moon remains, at liberty he can go on working his devilish moonmen."

He looked off, for Mutch had come forward, a grin on his ugly face.

"The same plan holds good, Captain," he said boomily. "We can demolish the ribs of machinery on the Moon, and still the men with the power we have here. We say not be able to land, but I can regulate this space-dome and I've got the choice. I know all five of the machinery units on the Moon, and we can wipe them out. What is it because of its afterwards—well, that is a mystery."

Captain Nick and the others looked at him eagerly.

"You mean it?" burst out the space adventurer, an amazing transformation coming to his wasted face. "Done with you, yes," said "And he took the engineer's hand.

Truly was Mutch making amends for his cowardice and treachery in the past.

★ MOON-MASTER DIES

GRAVE and actions was the time that followed.

In the vast-screen the space adventurers saw the remains of the Moon fleet, sinking back for the igneous globe, the Master of the Moon in the *Chavron* leading the way.

But even with her powerful electric-boat nation waiting at full power, the space-dome had no chance of coming up with the fleeing fleet.

What mischief the Master of the Moon had planned Captain Nick could not pass.

The space adventurer had investigated the five engines of the space-dome, and found that it consisted only of four rocket torpedoes tubes—and, of course, the power which could build a blasting shaft of electricity sufficient to destroy the whole of the remaining Moon fleet.

It was two hours before they came within the Moon's gravitation, and saw the huge globe once more stretching lengthwise like the

Space Adventurer Settles Accounts with the Moon-Master

a great grey incandescent ball seeming to fill the entire firmament.

Their electric engines were now in full blast to leave the pull of the Moon.

To guard possible attack, Captain Nick Mitch and Sam Pile were stationed in their machine guns. But before they saw the Moon rise, the white dome-like blinding spot black spheres—five at first, each one a gigantic ball of machinery, setting the Moon men in motion. Each one to be destroyed by the power in the space dome.

Mitch made his intricate calculations, and then the copper wire conductors was sent down miles beneath the space dome. They moved, and the space dome hovered over the principal city.

"All in," grunted Mitch. "Now!" Once again he heard the terrible ferocious howls of those threatening machines. Outside in the danger, standing by the machinery of the Moon Arc, Lord Algy peered down and saw the result.

There was a fearful blast of white light down there where the Moon city and home. Then, after an interval, another and another succeeded. Sam Pile's eyes were anxiously through the suit plates to Lord Algy.

"Yes, there, your Lordship! Don't switch on the Arc. We're demolishing these balls of machinery, but we're hardly enough power left for the last. We're nearly rid of the menace from the Moon though, thank the gods. Hello! What's that—what if you say?"

In reply Lord Algy's voice rose to a shout.

"Attack! The Master of the Moon. His space ship! What's to be done, I mean?" The power's dead, grunted Sam Pile. "We've just used the last. Cutback..."

Lord Algy's typewriter made no reply. He was staring out into the darkness from the hubcap of the space dome, and his tears pumped to his mouth at what he saw.

Striving through the gloom towards the space dome at lightning speed was the great shape of a space ship. How many miles away it was when the first ball was fired Lord Algy could not have told.

It struck somewhere. The station heaved violently to its explosion. Lord Algy's grunted his teeth as the space ship came on like a shooting star. He darted to the Moon Arc, but a surge of the switch on the great telephoto space gun told him that the power was utterly gone. Then Sam Pile, who had not stirred, said a sudden exclamation.

"The magnetic coils, be quick!"

He bent down to the intricate catapult machine which housed the magnetic coils. The whirly ball of the Universe was plunging towards the space dome with awful fall on Lord Algy could distinctly see its coils exposed, glowing red through the thick glass glow of the heat waves.

It was Dr. Mitch!

"Hold back now—for the last gamble," grunted Sam Pile, and turning the wheel that directed the catapult coils, he pulled the control release lever.

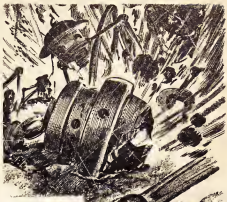
At the action the heavy magnetic arches leapt from its catapult straight towards the plunging ball. It struck the Universe's hull, closing fast.

"Hot you!" barked Sam.

Like a silver fish, the Universe plunged and slid on the side from the catapults. But the number from the great station held her fast, and by now Lord Algy was shooting frantically through his suit "panels."

"Hold her, Mitch! Play her!"

Mr. Pile indeed, was playing the space ship as if it were a great fish, maneuvering



A blast of electric fire played over the gigantic Moon machines, and they began tumbling in ruin.

the station skilfully, giving the Universe an opportunity either to run the station or to sink the cable. What was left of the power was now cranking out in a feeble protective way web round the great station, but there was not enough to supply the Arc.

Lord Algy, staring out across the great gap of empty space at the plunging space ship as the cable felt a shiver of apprehension.

He feared that the Master of the Moon, in a frenzy of desperation, would make for his gun and endeavor to push the mighty power down to his with death.

If the Moon Arc had been at optimum it would have caught the flying shells, the ray would have destroyed them as light, but the power was gone in destroying the Moon cities.

The young space adventurer stood stiff and erect on the edge of the "dome, a driver of excitement and apprehension, staring through his teeth.

He knew that the best of the crew were running to their stations, some to the catapult coils. But would they get there before the Master of the Moon fired again?

But then it became plain that Dr. Mitch did not mean to let again at the great station. He was caught, like a fish on a line, and the mighty Master of the Moon was in a veritable pique. He stared at the outline of the ship, far away in the gloom, staring relay by every article he knew to break free, and he had no time for guesswork work.

But break free he could not.

And in their few moments of sailing and watching a wilder machine, also was suddenly born in Lord Algy's brain.

Next moment, seeing going himself time to think, the reckless young space adventurer had launched himself out on the cable, and was swinging along at hand over head.

The Master of the Moon, seeing the young space man traveling over the cable towards him, dashed out through the air lock on to the saucer platform.

His mind was at a frenzy at his failure to escape.

So he awaited Lord Algy, setting with rage and impetuosity.

"So," he shouted at the young space adventurer clanked up over the platform of the Universe. "One of you has been delivered into my hands. And no fight—to the death!" eyed the man swiftly fiercely. "There are two here in the stricken-dome one. On guard. Death shall come to take you—before me!"

Each seized up an iron bar at the same moment, and the next they were at it, fighting fiercely as they crept on the cushioned spine of the platform.

"Ah! Got you!" The Master of the Moon's bar nudged on Lord Algy's left shoulder. With a strength of the young man pulled away.

"Not quite," he gasped, and they were fighting again.

Suddenly there came a moment when the Master of the Moon lunged, aimed—and stopped. His gleaming helmet nudged against the rail of the platform, and crashed.

The crash was horrible to contemplate.

Quickly, the Master of the Moon did not immediately die, his sprawling out in the arched vault, he was at his front, his face contorted with agony excruciating.

Lord Algy's next close observation was of Captain Nick gripping his head, and there was a muffled cry from the bundled lips of the Universe space adventurer.

"It is all over, your Lordship. The owner of the Moon is smothered. And look, the Master of the Moon is in there. We had his man!"

Lord Algy raised up and saw the great space dome dropping.

They saw it crash upon the Moon, but by then the Universe was launched and bound. The Master of the Moon was no more, and his secrets were bound with him. No longer had the Earth anything to fear from an outside for the Moonmen knew nothing of the discoverers of the strange warped person who had once ruled over them.

THE END

DEVILMAN of the

A STRANGE AND POWERFUL civilisation on the bed of the Atlantic, ruled by a grotesque creature half Man, half Fish. And into this Amazing World came three intrepid Explorers.

★ CORNERED IN THE DEPTHS

THIS was of the subterranean world had known!

Crawling there in the darkness of the sea, leaving only the distant rumble of the volcanic forces far below the bed of the Atlantic Ocean, Mark Stannard and his companions, Baloo Kells and Abel Cornwell, held their breaths in anticipation.

From below their hiding-place, near the sea bed, the enemy were coming, bent on their destruction.

Already the strange whirling signal of the Devilman, the monster who led his hosts of subterranean warriors, came up the narrow passages of the mountain of the deep.

A strange! no more seemed to weigh on the atmosphere. Where would the enemy strike? Where would the blow fall?

Already these three adventurers had come into conflict with the weird creatures that lived out miles below the sea. Already they had seen this hideous Devilman, shark-like, yet monstrous too.

Already the three had penetrated the secret of the highly intelligent fishes, and had seen the vast machinery with which they controlled the waves and the volumes below the sea bed. Every sea revelation had been more amazing than the last.

Twice Stannard and his companions had been in the verge of escape by means of the friendly aid of the wise old mermaid fish-man, Sea Flight, the power who had been disposed by the powerful Devilman.

An attempt to rise to the surface in air bubbles had been frustrated; and now, having escaped from the pit of torture, they reached in a cave while Sea Flight had gone to reconnoitre.

He had told them that there was another way, a passage leading through the subterranean mountains that led to a hidden

cellar, or so Stannard the coast of South America.

But he had been gone a long time and from below the three heard the sea rumble and fighting that told that Sea Flight's forces had broken out to reach.

How was the way veiling? That was the question that haunted at the houses of Stannard and his comrades. If Devilman were under they would perish there in that cold cave, miles below the surface of the sea. They dared not emerge to face the fury of the monster.

Light had flashed, the volume had burst into activity, there was a passing colour of sulphur everywhere.

"We can't wait here much longer, sir," said Cornwell, Stannard's servant, the black imagination of the Deep.

Abel made no pretence of being a coward. He was a seaman, a man of tried courage and daring; and the strange lights he had seen had paralysed him.

"What do you propose, Abel?" when asked Kells.

"Why, sir, let us leave this hole and try our luck somewhere. I don't rightly know how, or where, we can make any progress, but I'd rather die in a good light than three shaggy monsters that let here in this black hole."

"What was that?" came from Stannard who had been listening eagerly.

The soft padding of feet came to their ears. A voice spoke through the darkness. He was in a room. Kells—It is I—the Devilman!"

The form of the fish-man, the personal physician to Sea Flight, stepped out of the sea-knave and stood before them. He was beardless with rousing and his waddy legs gave signs of weakness.

Sea Flight went on. He has discovered

that the passage is blocked by Devilman's forces. They are not aware that the passage is a long tunnel, but they are using it for marching troops. So you cannot go that way. And the result against Devilman has started."

"We guessed so," said Kells. "We have heard the cries of the fighters and the trampling of Devilman."

"Only something has taken place so far," went on the Healer. "The main attack is being launched soon—not by us, but by Devilman. He has come to wipe out all Sea Flight's followers. He is organising a swarm of every race and creature in the mountains. Already he has opened the gates of the volcano and is throwing his captives into the flaming depths."

He was silent for a moment as there came the rumour and yells of combatants from the distance.

"Sea Flight wants you to join him," went on the Healer. "You will do if you remain here, and Devilman does not know all the secrets of our business. Are you ready?"

"If only my revolver had a few bullets in it," said Stannard. "I would have died happy after I'd killed Devilman."

He handed the empty weapon which he had taken from his belt.

They may be able to provide you with more ammunition than my revolver," smiled the Healer. "Come with me, and tread softly. We have enemies posted at intervals."

They slipped out of the cold cave and followed him.

It was a long walk. Sometimes it was a crawl through black holes, sometimes a stiff climb led to be momentarily but the darkness led the stumbling men from there.

Only at intervals Healer said a word to lead them through the dark, and the men would answer and slide back again. There were fish-men who acted as sentries in the forests of Sea Flight.

Gradually the little party progressed up a steep slope and found themselves facing the cave from which they had emerged to view the pit of horror.

The great heeler was blocking the entrance, but the Healer gave a signal. The heeler raised back slowly, and they entered.

Sea Flight was there, alone. His small red lamp was burning dimly. As soon as they were inside, the heeler was called back again.

"We mean to have been a long way to get back here," said Stannard.

"You have been traversing the mountain tracks of the mountains," replied Sea Flight. But we cannot remain here long. Devilman is already following you."

He raised his hand for silence. Once again they faced the shuffling mass of fish-men eyes.

They stood still, and looked at a word. The shuffling continued their own whisper.



The hideous fish-man raised the evil-looking instrument just as Kells brought up his gun. It was a moment fraught with peril.

DEEP

ings. Then a yell arose that startled them. It was the cry of Sea-Queen from the other side of the boulder.

"Come out, Sea-Flight! You and the Earthworm are recovered!"

But Sea-Flight did not answer, and Sea-Queen ran that a strange noise crept over his face.

"Devilman came by a shorter route," he whispered softly. "I expected him to return after your rescue from the pit of terrors. The app gave him the route, no doubt."

Again the yell of triumph came from the other side of the boulder. Sea-Queen could be seen working this way through the space between the mass of rock and the wall, peering this way and that, trying to get a hold on the rock.

The Healer stopped forward and struck softly at every arm in turn. Cries of pain arose and the arms were withdrawn.

And then—silence. Not a movement, not a sound. Not even the shuffling of the feet.

Why did the enemy not lead the boulder aside? Sea-Flight had moved it alone. The Healer had moved it alone.

Sea-Queen's eyes were fastened on the gigantic rock, which was about ten feet high. The expression of Sea-Queen's face seemed to assure Sea-Flight, who bent and whispered.

"You forget the magnets, Earthworm!"

He pointed in a small lever by the wall, then to the boulder, indicating the magnet to operate it. There seemed to be no fear of his loss in the mind of Sea-Flight just then. His night have been pointing to a geological specimen.

Sea-Queen stopped forward and Kells followed her example. Then they saw the reason quickly enough. The great rock was a mass of iron ore. Arms of iron stretched it and lay on its rugged surface.

At a gesture from Sea-Flight, they looked at the wall beside the lever. The wall was a sheet of magnetized metal, a magnet the power of which could be cut off when the lever was moved by the simple person of a lead shattering that was ready to drop in front of it.

Not all the force of a hundred fishermen could move that boulder when the magnet held it close against itself.

"We are safe, then," muttered Abel Currier, as he followed the examination closely.

"Not quite," replied the Healer. "Devilman is outside and he is quiet because he is waiting for the chance to force the rock!"

Sea-Flight nodded agreement. These two seemed to diagnose their enemies' intentions as if they had been in the enemy camp.

"Devilman!" called Sea-Flight sharply, still softly.

From the other side of the rock, over the trumpet of the monster.

"Will you surrender, Sea-Flight?"

"I rarely want to ask why you are quiet and then? Are you afraid of coming into this cavern?"

"I will come in, never fear, and then all of you will go to the torture pit to be dragged of your flesh," came the rasping cry of the Devilman.

"You have sent for damaging equipment," mocked Sea-Flight. "You will not need them. I will open the door for you."

"When?"

"When you have counted a hundred, Devilman. Let me hear you count a hundred!"

"Why a hundred?"

"Because for a hundred years you have been my enemy, and I wish you to know that your time has come to the before another year may be counted!" roared Sea-Flight angrily.



Trumpeting shrilly, Devilman hurled the creature down into the depths.

"I will count a hundred," roared Devilman angrily. "To remind you that you will be forced into a hundred stripes and your skin will make leather for shoes—ships!"

He began to count the numbers; but hardly had he counted out the first when Sea-Flight leaped into his companions.

He walked to the centre of the cave and pointed towards the rock. The dim light did not at first reveal anything, but Abel Currier's sharp vision caught sight of something hanging from the darkness.

It was a cable that dropped from the ceiling and hung straight and stiff. Sea-Flight leaped onto the wall, using like a deer from his thin spindly legs. Next moment he had dragged down the cable and placed it in the hands of Sea-Queen.

"Up!" he urged it in a whisper. "Up!"

★ BATTLE WITH A SHARK

STANMOORE showed. Hand over hand he went up the cable; then after less than Kells, Abel, the Healer, and finally Sea-Flight.

Devilman had reached half way in his counting when the last of the fugitives disappeared in the twisted ceiling. They were in a natural chimney.

As soon as he reached the circular hole in the roof Sea-Flight began of himself against

the walls of the tunnel and called a loud cheer over the opening. Then he continued to count.

As for Sea-Queen, who led the procession, he was able to feel that he was in a shaft that rose straight and clear. All of these were painted chambers so that the effort was not too much for them; but every now and then the voice of Sea-Flight came from below, encouraging them to count higher still.

"A hundred feet or so," he called softly. "and then we are safe. Do not doubt. Devilman has broken to below!"

There was no doubt of that. They heard the crashing and crashing of stone, the shouts of anger and disappointment.

For the fugitives continued their climb until Sea-Queen's hand came in contact with what appeared to be the end of the tunnel.

He called down in a whisper that he could go no farther.

"Keep still!" replied Sea-Flight, and to Sea-Queen's surprise the voice was at his side.

Those other heads of Sea-Flight and the Healer had left the rope and were fastened to the wall of the chimney. They were climbing like flies by suction.

Suddenly a breath of cooler air descended. A mass of metal and a flood of light appeared there.

"Give me your lead," said Sea Flight, and I will pull you up."

He and the Healer were standing above the three human beings, straddling a hole that had the appearance of a square trap door. Stannard, Kells and Cornwall were pulled up into into a big chamber which was labyrinthine.

Sea Flight pulled up the cable, and threw it into a corner after whispering it down to look at the lower side of the "trap-door."

Then he and the Healer lowered the "box" into position. It was like a pavement flagstone, unworked and rubbed so even that its edges fitted into the stopper of a basin. But beyond the square that framed the mouth of the funnel this led covered the ground rock a matter of a foot in every inch. A pale gleam of light from the chamber would show in square holes.

Across one side of the chamber was a heavy mass of solid ice, smooth as glass, hard as iron.

On the walls were gauges and indicators, valves and pressure measures such as are found in a ship's engine-room. Long, thin copper pipes went through the walls and the corners of the floor, all of them polished and beveled and shining.

From the roof hung hammocks that had already been taken from ships. A stanchion, which was erected against the wall, looked in front of the water's surface, and looked the hammock a compass. And on a table was what looked like a large circular mirror, but didn't show or glow; it was a solid stone that no man had ever seen before. It shone and glimmered, and across its surface swam a dim, shadow-like movement east and west.

"You are inside the highest peak of the mountain range," explained Sea Flight. "You have left the mountain side which you were first taken captive. That ice block is a window."

He stepped back and switched on the light—electric light that came from a globe that had once been used on a ship.

In the darkness it was possible to see the movement of the ocean through the clear—no, sorry, dead kind of movement. Here and there in the depths tiny lights shone and glowed.

"They were the lights of the deadmen of the deep, those strange fish that live in outer darkness and are captured with phosphorescent eyes and feelers—not fish really, but floating fragments of life."

Again Sea Flight stepped on a switch. A great beam shone through the dark corners, attracting swirling things, and the creatures, shiny things for which no words he knew, and beyond those ugly forms that rubbed their sides and faces against the ice window the powerful beam forced a strange submarine landscape.

Sea Flight pointed towards the rising slope of the submarine mountain that came into the darkness and was lost in the depths.

They by the dimmed beams of a cracked lantern, its dark beam faded to its level as sides and with sand and green with mud.

Then lay all that was left of a partially buried sailing ship, only its broad stem, raised above the salt that covered its lower and lower.

The lanterns were black and rotten, it dripped with weed and crawling, shell-like things.

What looked like the comparatively new wreck of a liner was raised on its side under two powerful that told it like a pair of gigantic pincers. They were holding at the ocean's graveyard.

"You have seen the work of Devlin," said Sea Flight grimly. "He brought those wrecked down because he knew destruction. Until he came here we did not see our maps against humanity. We need them for the use of our humanity."

He stepped on the starlight and then

a certain of strange stars across the ice window. Then he switched on the light of the chamber again.

"You will wonder how it comes that I have these tanks of ships here," he said, pointing the gauges and steering wheel.

They are from ships, but not ships that we deliberately wrecked. Look into this."

He pointed to the circular mirror on the table, and pressed a button on the wall. The mirror tilted, moving up and down and round.

Gradually out of the vaporous shape emerged there, before their astonished eyes, now a vision of the surface of the ocean. The sea shone and the waves danced. The ships were frocked with blue.

On the very edge of the horizon circle a ship moved, leaving a stream of smoke behind. A big ocean liner, and her keels with were lost in the wind.

Sea Flight gave a sudden twist to the mirror, and once again darkness and vaporous spread over its surface. Gradually the dimness vanished and all was grey and green and blue mingled.

An enormous fish thrust itself badly into the picture. It was a whale, and not far from it a shark moved its rolling way, then again fish.

Again Sea Flight twisted the mirror, and the scene the view was of a reef, then and again. Now there appeared a form they all recognized.

It was the form of Devlin. He seemed to swim on his side, and following him were a host of small, black fish men with a devil and followed by the jet of water. These creatures crossed the face of the mirror and disappeared, and Sea Flight sighed, this stroke.

"What is the meaning of all this?" asked Cornwall, his eyes set on Sea Flight, but on Devlin.

"Do you understand it?" asked Sea Flight of Stannard and Kells. "We call it the oligarchy."

"The distribution of light and shade?" interrupted Kells suddenly. "What sense is in this name that you can command these waves to appear?"

"I think I understood," remarked Stannard, and his voice held a great respect.

"That is the truth that Kells's throat as weakened some years ago—the breaking of light, the making of possible lines, the ability, in short, of being able to use named objects of society and nothing."

"That is the fact, my friends," interrupted Sea Flight. "But my weakness as far from perfect. I can't follow the movements of Devlin, but there are others in these subterranean mountains that bring me and cloud the mirror. Yet it has told me that Devlin, having been notified that our starlight was playing on the water's surface again, has emerged to track it."

He is outside the ice window now, but he cannot know that."

"He can't see the face of all your intentions," said Kells.

"No, but he knows that I have more knowledge than he. It is in fact that you have wanted the dead bodies of you three to Devlin that he might absorb all your knowledge, then kill you."

He gave a twist to the mirror again and bent over it. A cry escaped his lips. The others bent over the scene and held their breaths.

There was Devlin, moving slowly up against the dark walls whose walls they stood. He had been once like fish-men and they were floating in a watery circle. But what the object of the mountain was was at last obvious to see.

A moment later it became plain. The shark was following the fish-man, and in the distance came other sharks, now across him on prey.

The shark came quickly, so quickly that it seemed to happen all at once.

There was a flash from the foremost shark as it turned east, showing its white belly,

and amid a shower of bubbles it rose with a struggling fish-man in its maw.

The attack brought the other sharks, and one of them was a mighty monster, at least thirty feet long—a hammerhead, the most dangerous beast of the seas.

The fish-man vaporized and went up and down in frantic haste to escape. They beat the water, they dived and leaped like ants; and then Devlin was the hammerhead and tailed to meet it.

For a moment the Devlin moved to stand upright, measuring his distance. He waited motionless until the hammerhead turned to snap; and then Devlin leaped himself at it with all his force.

Straight at the shark's throat he dived, his two rubber bands clanking at the white shark. He seemed to rip it open, for blood came.

The scene was clouded by the whirling waters and the fish. Wave after wave rolled over the fighters, obscuring them, and in a few minutes the waves cleared.

There was Devlin clinging to the throat of the mighty hammerhead with his two rubber bands. He hung there desperately, and the body of the shark moved this and that again, its tail beating a tattoo that beat faded and soon was still.

The fish-man crowded round. Devlin took his hands from the throat of the last, and then it lay dead, and the fish-man pounced on it and bore it off, while Devlin swam after them leisurely.

The picture faded from the mirror and all was dark and vague again. Sea Flight breathed freely.

"That is not the first time the sharks have noted the chamber from outside our station. We are high enough for sharks to make this a place of fishing for them. Devlin has ever found sharks in sight when he comes in this direction. He has won every time, and the sharks have been carried down to the ocean for food."

"Then you deliberately put us in the sunlight to attract him?" asked Stannard.

Sea Flight smiled, and among the steering wheel, gave it a turn or two. A puff of steam issued from one of the brass pipes, the needle of two gauges spun upwards and returned slowly.

"I have timed this so well of the front crew," he cried in a loud voice. "Now a new time to attack at this when he enters with his legions."

He ran to an alcove of the chamber and drew back a curtain.

"You game and amazing!" he cried excitedly. "I had then returned from your ship. Quick! help yourselves. And here are bombs, taken from the kitchenery you use outside on the mountain. We have used them before. They are the only weapons that we fish-men can throw. Healer, to your post!"

The Healer sprang in the greatest fear on the face while Sea Flight stepped on the light. Stannard, Kells and Cornwall were extending suggestions into their resolve, and backing on upon horses, after their pockets with electric pellets.

Up came the trap to the hands of the Healer. He bent down to listen, then, raised his head.

"Devlin has left guards," he whispered. "I hear those below."

He seized a bomb and dropped it through the trap, but just as he got ready to let the middle of death descend. Then he dropped the trap into its place.

From below came a roar that seemed to rock the plateau of the mountain. They waited in silence. Then up came the trap and another bomb descended. The trap was closed at once. Again the explosion shook the rock at their feet.

Two more bombs were thrown below the circle was dropped and Sea Flight descended. The Healer seemed to be palpating with anxiety.

"The Hunter is always taking his life,"

he muttered. And then he shouted down the tunnel.

"All is well. Deceased," came back the response.

Down the cable they slithered, sliding as quickly as they dared.

They found Sea Flight standing in the chamber. He had lit the lamp which he had taken from a crevice of rock.

The chamber was a scene of devastation. Bodies of fish-men lay in heaps, many were dazed. The walls had not escaped without the effects of the explosion reaching them, but the main force had found the exit from which the boulder had been withdrawn.

Out of that rough doorway the explosion had blown most of Devlin's guards in a terrific gust. Along the narrow passage leading to the door they lay, dead and beyond recognition. Not a man came from that dreadful pile of what had been fish-men a few moments before.

"Now to the entrance cave!" said Sea Flight in a terrible tone. "Hinder, sound the signal for our men to come and to enter this place."

The Hinder raised his voice in a strange cry that echoed round the walls and along the corridors of rock. Then he gave the signal; and then with a murmur to the others they plunged ahead.

Devlin must remain outside during the battle. But he can signal to them. The attack is fixed now.

Kells stopped forward then and stood before the Prince, Sea Flight.

"What my friend suggests is better," he said. "Why wait until these black devil attack?"

"We have no weapons like them," replied Sea Flight. "Our men have nothing but their own arms. These blacks hold the metal of the manufacture and have worked their weapons for themselves. You would not have our best fish-men on these prongs!"

"No, but there is such a thing as a first movement!"

"What is that?"

For a moment the question struck Kells as too simple to be accepted. Yet it was the fact that these warriors of the deep, these fish-men who were so intelligent in other things, never contemplated a first.

Their whole pastime had descended their hole as simple, straight-forward action. He had never feared with them. Death was a gliding terror. Nature never protected. She just presented difficulties to be surmounted.

Here was one of the limitations that separated these creatures from man. These brains could not conceive up a deception.

★ EARTHMAN TAKES COMMAND

FULL a moment Stannore was deep in thought, then he turned to his companions.

"One of us must get round by the corridor to the opposite side. Then he will show himself and draw their attack. It will be a dangerous job."

"I will do it, sir," said Cornwall.

It was settled in a few minutes and Abel was dispatched on his journey, with the Hinder to guide him along the tracks.

Meanwhile Stannore and Kells descended by another track to an opening as near as possible to the grotto. There, standing behind a projecting rock, they waited.

They could not see, for they dared not let the blacks get a hint of their presence; but before long they heard what they had expected.

A yell burst out from the blacks, followed by the shout of Cornwall, and the crack of his revolver.

The rush of the blacks past the hiding place of Stannore and Kells was accompanied by cries that shook the air. What these diminutive fish-men liked in statures they made up in ferocity; and Stannore, perceiving that the entire body of them had started in attack Cornwall, with the excep-

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There was by the machinery from this time, but the machinery was silent and still. From below came no sound of volcanic rumbling, no flames, no glimmer of molten earth.

They stood on the great silence, and at last reached a ledge above the main cave.

They peered over. The place was lined with fish-men dressed up against the walls, but they were not the usual fish-men of the place. They were the black, small specimens of the future pit. Every one bore in his hand a weapon that looked like a trident of light metal.

"If we could get to the ship, or even the grotto," whispered Stannore, "we could get them a warm reception!"

He pointed to where his ship lay against the wall, and to the grotto that opened out from it.

The Hinder shook his head and pointed in reply to the dark forms of the warrior fish-men below.

"They are waiting for the return of Devlin," he said. "They will not have these guests."

"And where are your forces?"

"In the next cave. We must wait here until the enemy attack and then take them in the rear."

"And Devlin?"

Sea Flight had put the watchword out of action, as he told you. The two small men can be moved back to find the cave, and

Something of the superiority of the human brain was found on Sea Flight as he saw the black look on the faces of Stannore and Kells. Even unregimented Cornwall stared at the Prince in surprise.

"Our scheme will succeed," said Kells quietly. "If you follow our advice. A first is a gesture, a movement that is intended to deceive the enemy. If he responds we shall be the winners."

"Explosion, please."

Your fish-men are in the adjoining cave. These blacks are ready to attack. But suppose we cause a diversion? Stannore, tell the Prince what you suggest. I don't know myself.

In a few words Stannore gave his version. To get to the ship or the grotto the black fish-men must be made to permit a passage. So that their attack must be drawn off that quarter.

"Why not turn on the magnets, sir," suggested Abel Cornwall, "and their trident will jump out of their hands!"

He glanced at the blacks below and shivered at the thought of being stalked with these pronged weapons.

"Devlin has turned off the magnets," said the Hinder shortly. "We have no time for any chance to conquer the enemy now."

"Very well," said Stannore quickly, "we'll manage somehow. Give a poor permission to try, Prince?"

"Yes, sir, I'll have them 2," said Sea Flight gruffly. "Take command."



tion of a few who still lagged beside the grotto.

Out into the open rushed the two, resolute in heart. They cut across the ground at top speed, firing at the fish-men as they went.

Every shot told. Down went the guards of the grotto, one after the other; but they flung their triple-pointed weapons with tremendous power. Even while they writhed on the ground they summoned sufficient strength to hurl these weapons.

Right up to the last of these Stannore and Kells charged, firing point-blank into the fish-men; and there at the mouth of the grotto they turned and met a final volley at those who returned to the attack.

It was then that they realized the extreme peril of Cornwall. He had boldly stepped out into the arena with revolver and knife. Now he was surrounded while tridents slashed at him viciously, and fish-men attempted to surround him. But Cornwall did not intend to be surrounded.

He backed against the wall, and fired as readily as if he were dealing with men whom he despised. His knife cut and slashed, too, and more than once he lifted a fish-man bodily and threw him into the gelling mesh, knocking down others in that process.

But his gun was soon emptied. He slipped it into his pocket, rushed forward with his knife and slashed furiously. His enemies gave way before that terrible rush. He picked up a fallen trident and with that he was keeping them at bay when Stannore's voice rang out.

Earthmen Lead a Battle of the Fish-men

"Run for it, Cornwall!" Shouted to the flight!

"Aye, aye, aye!"
Stannum and Kells had by then their swords in the ground. The water was still open, but two of the gun had been shot outward, their long muzzles showing like stars.

Cornwall swept a wide circle in front of him with his lantern, then leaped in the direction of Stannum's order. The black could not run as fast as a man, but they were studying themselves to read a shower of weapons after him when the gun spoke.

But he is to! But he is to! The clatter of the gun spoke out with that peevish bark of a black-gun.

Down went the black fish-man in a heap. The bullets piercing them through and through and following themselves against the rock below.

Kells to send their bullets through the descent of water and for extreme distance, the thickly packed mesh of black was easy work for the weapon.

But he is to! But he is to!

Round the corner went Cornwall, racing as fast as he could. And the web of death that the gun traced was ended any corner that was attempted. But there was another danger.

From suggested shadows where they had taken shelter at the first rattle of the gun fish-men shot out to intercept the runner. They came thick enough told them that the death that was cutting down their fellows was on the other side of the corner. No bullets struck where they concealed.

As Cornwall moved past these men he could figure them. They were open upon his flank at him. Most fell far behind, he told all.

One staggered between his legs. He tripped, spun round, and fell with a crash, and next moment a blackfish was upon him.

Kells saw the incident and automatically brought his gun to bear on the spot, but he did not fire. Stannum was busy spraying bullets at the men that was making shelter on the opposite side of the curve. It was Kells's shot that brought his open round.

That of the black fish-man clattering in his hands. Even so he ran forward like the black fish was joined by another and then by a third. Also Cornwall was still on the ground. A trident was raised high and the fishman who landed it gave a queer scream of triumph as he thrust it at Cornwall with all his force. And then he gave another kind of scream and clamped to the rock as a bullet from Kells's revolver burst a chain link through his head.

A shout of having escaped Kells as he landed beyond. The trident was sunk in Cornwall's chest, and Kells's body gave a convulsive shudder as one of the other fishmen landed his trident head on his neck.

They used another bullet into this black's body. He rolled over and Kells found him still facing the third, who had thrust to his feet and had withdrawn the trident from Cornwall's body.

He had pointed it ready to throw, his arm held back above his head, his little feet planted firmly.

There was no fear in his body eyes, not a sign of nervousness in his attitude, and Kells could not but admire this purposeful defiance as he held his weapon aloft. A glance at that weapon showed Kells that the grange of the trident went into the dragon, they were bent forward almost double like a ball-balancer bent.

"If you left that death-weapon," said the piggy, coldly, "you shall be first, Earthman!"

Kells's hand had unconsciously come up to his chin. They were standing face, each other in front of the great bulk of Cornwall, and Kells saw Cornwall's open eyes, and gain at them steadily. There was blood on Cornwall's head, and the right hand held Kells's trident.

"Then death-dealer to my hand, Fishman!" he said slowly, "my spear against that the thing you hold."

His hand came up another inch, but the black noticed it and withdrew, he saw there lack a trident, the spear poised.

"I am the last thrower of the trident in these caves," he cried. "I am the maker of the trident!"

For a breath's motion moved, but Kells saw Cornwall suddenly sweep his right hand high behind the fishman. His fist closed over the handle of the spear. The leg, and down went the fish-man on his back, sprawling in fury, yet he had hardly touched the ground when Kells was on top of him.

"His maw, see!" cried Cornwall warningly; and Kells grabbed the arm of

"Bent under!" he cried, "or I tell your leader!"

"Right on!" screamed the piggy under his arm, his voice high as the scream of a small.

"Look out, Kells!" came Stannum's shout suddenly.

Two fishmen had crept along the ground and were close to the ponds, to show that the leg gun could not be depressed soft easily to aim at them. These again were raised. Kells threw his piggy into the man-hole where Cornwall used the captive and knew him to be first. The moment Kells was inside the space of the two fishmen rattled against the floor, but Stannum had drawn his number and fired twice. The two fishmen lay writhing in death throes.

Then the leg gun spoke again, moving to and fro along the walls of the cavern, making down those who still moved.

Backward and forward the chains, cages of their men swung slowly with out a fishman remained upright. Down, however, and taken shelter in the jagged rocks. The gun ceased roaring.

"There down your spear and come out!" cried Stannum, "Surrender to the Prince Sea Flight!"

They came out after a moment, as two and three. They dropped their spears on the ground and huddled together in the corner of the cavern. Cautious, shaken, terrified, they had all the light knocked out of them.

Stannum stepped from the ponds, moved to his hand. He had no need to call on Sea Flight. The Prince was already in the cave with the leader by his side. From the night-bearing across the water fishmen emerged to battle formation, marching down deep, shouting their adobe to the victors of their equipment.

The black was surrounded and marched off into the depths of the underground, and Sea Flight and the black returned with Stannum to the ponds. They found Kells had taken the piggy trident secretly with his help. Cornwall was sitting standing in his cage.

The black bent over the screen and examined it, then rose with a look of satisfaction on his face.

"It is very little," he said. "I shall lead it very quickly!"

"I know it is nothing," replied Cornwall, with a grin. "This spear is just the thing that makes mine their legs, see. All that need be obtained from the works of days."

Sea Flight turned to Stannum.

"What can I do to repay you, Earthman? The first battle to me!"

Take the trap to your promise, Sea Flight, and show in the passage you mentioned that leads to South America. That is about all we can.

Sea Flight pulled against fishman, who came to him, backing and took the black prisoner away.

"Next to Providence," he said, "that fate was in the greatest enemy we have. It is the controller of the military career, which is the next part of our career. Come, our way has just the magnets and the engine. After you have failed and been engaged for the journey I will give you direction for your passage out of the net."

They left the ponds and began to climb the steep, rocky walls towards the entrance above. But a sound remained in the great vaulted cavern when they had left it.

The darkness and eternal silence of the cavern had penetrated the depths.

When they reached the shelf on which they had stood before the battle black looked down upon the dragon. The sea wall had opened slightly and the sea was surging in, while from below came the rumble of the machinery that had started once again.

Now a strange adventure in secret war's long involvement of dark service. Under your eye of SCOOOPS editorial policy.

FAST ROADS for BRITAIN

Autotraders are coming!



AUTOTRADER, giant concrete speedways, reserved for motor traffic only, and along which private cars and heavy lorries can travel at speed between large towns, are now a recognized thing in Italy.

Altogether Italy has 183 miles of auto roads, the longest being nearly seventy miles in length and connecting Genoa, Turin and Milan.

Similar roads had been planned for this country, and there was a firm willing to construct the first, from London to Brighton. On this autotrade no one would be permitted to pass on the main traffic above (below about 50 m.p.h.) and much higher speeds would be possible as the designers intend to construct road over everything that would hinder speed and safety, and to have no side turn, stop, or crossing.

This idea is to charge a small toll for the use of the speedways, and if it is a success—so is almost certain—to have more of them radiating out of London to coastal towns.

But the Government refused to sanction the construction of the first road, and the scheme had to be abandoned.

Such roads would come in the future, for traffic congestion on all roads out of London grows steadily greater, and the winding routes of suburban roads, through which the traffic, now, are obviously unable to cope with their loadings.

The papers had passed them in a gush that would be forgotten.

With haste he laid the black under his arm, holding him tightly so that he could not kick with his powerful legs and spit fire from his coal mouth.

"To the ponds, sir!" cried Cornwall. "You got his too good!" Bang bang with you!

They turned and almost flew along the rocky ground; followed by the puff of the spit that tried to chase them. But Stannum's gun pointed its death in a certain through which none could pass.

Nevertheless a cloud of spray sailed through the air and settled in their feet as they walked the smooth. Cornwall chuckled aside, but Kells remained beyond the door. He held the piggy high above his head so that the black might see.

VOICE from the VOID

A PHANTOM SHIP that came from Nowhere and disappeared into Nothingness. And with it a Voice—a Mighty Voice that Spoke from the Void



Mr. Bilks' fist shot out, and the murderer took it fair and square. His gun flashed harmlessly.

★ A SPY IS CAPTURED

SAVE for the crash of the net, and the transient heat of the great waves as the stones of Donough's hand, all was silent as Jimmy and Mr. Bilks, gone close together, lay flat on the sidewalk beneath stones and stared towards where, in the shadows of the old shack, looked the van with the silken pallid who had fired at them.

Just as they had arrived by boat the murderer's weapon had spoken, and now the strangely gaunt pair were taking no chance.

That was not the first suspicion on which attempts had been made on their lives. For Jimmy and Mr. Bilks were on Secret Service work, and death waited at every step.

Out of a job some weeks before, Jimmy had consulted his uncle, Lord Donough, the Foreign Secretary, and as a result had been sent marching for a Phantom Ship that had been seen on the Rhine, side of the Thames estuary, and to investigate strange gossip of a Voice, a mysterious Voice that spoke out of Nowhere.

Jimmy had seen the Phantom Ship—a strange ghost vessel that came out of the mist and disappeared again into nothingness. He had heard the Voice, too—a Voice from the Void that came roaring in from a

chamfered tongue at strange places and out of Nowhere.

Then Jimmy had met 'Avery Bilks, a vigorous old soldier, who was staying on the coast for the good of his health.

A story that on the exchange intended for Jimmy, had caught Mr. Bilks' bowels last, and the incident had convinced the friend-ship 'Avery Bilks was "in" on the adventure.

Instructions had sent them to France, and left for Arabia, but now they were back in Donough's waiting for anything that might happen.

And at that time Braggens had taken a house in Donough's town. Braggens, the watchman to whom the Voice had first spoken.

It had been on that cold-snowy night that Jimmy and Mr. Bilks had followed Braggens out in his heavy yacht, and had seen the Phantom Ship strike at the warehouse. But they had seen the yacht run to safety, and it had been while Jimmy and Mr. Bilks were crossing waters again that the gunner's vessel of war-ship had sent its deadly missile that caught the old soldier's bowels last.

Mr. Bilks whistled. "Of all the luck! Five in the second round! 'At I've had much by bad shooting."

Whether he intended to admit that he would have preferred to see his bowels last quite safe and sound at the expense of, say, his head, Jimmy did not know.

The hat itself reposed on the ground some feet away, a neat, round hole marking the passage of the smothering bullet.

"I'm not stopping here long," said Jimmy, between his teeth. "I'm going to try and catch that fellow. How about a lot of warning?"

"How about a bit of bed," grunted Mr. Bilks. "Talk about luck! 'At I've had enough to-night to last me a lifetime, with all the war and all that. You go on my way and I'll go the other."

He began to crawl away—in the direction of his hat. Jimmy watched along the stones in the opposite direction. As it was very dark they were Jimmy thought, unobtrusive, and it was quite possible that by a dodge, move and a quick dash they would capture their assassin.

He had not dithered. That was clear. He was crawling in the absolute silence, for there to make a move and thud! then thud! thud!

Jimmy trembled that he would be on the side of the big shack facing them, so that if they could get to either one or both of its ends, they might trap him.

They waited to this purpose. War experience had taught Mr. Bilks to keep cover closely, and Jimmy was alive and moved slowly.

The rest, of course, was left to him: they were watched, and he would keep cover as long as possible but he himself should be shot while waiting away.

And thus passed several tense moments—Jimmy and Mr. Bilks working carefully to work their objective, and the gunman lurking in the pitch darkness at the shack wall, waiting, his gun ready for instant action.

Jimmy described a wide circle, passed the end of the shack, and got up.

He knew that if the man were as he was used, on that side of the shack facing the land, he himself would run to his death in time. He padded forward very softly, keeping on his toes.

As he did this he heard another of the champagne-cork-like plops. No cry followed it and Jimmy, who had come to a breathless standstill, felt moved. Evidently the gunman had fired either at Mr. Bilks or at some moving shadow, and equally evidently he had hit no one.

Now Jimmy was at the end of the shack, close against the rough, stained wood, and he crept along inside it until he reached the corner. Raced that corner, somewhere along the side of the shack, stood the gunman.

Jimmy very cautiously peeped round. He had a glimpse of the man—he who showed his head in profile for only half a second—standing back against the wall, leaning on it, his gun in his hand. Fortunately the fellow did not happen to be looking his way just then, so his movement was unperceived.

The problem was how to get at him. To come round the corner and charge first would be to invite disaster, for he would be able to shoot Jimmy before he reached him.

Jimmy waited. Perhaps Mr. Bilks would arrive, and then things would happen for the old soldier always displayed considerable resource in emergency. For this

A Spy Faces Death—and Talks

Mr. Bilko did arrive. He arrived at the same end of the shark as Jimmy—a move for which Jimmy was totally unprepared, but which had a certain amount of intelligence about it.

For Mr. Bilko, having arrived, seemed. The move was deliberate, and he cut it short, as though he strove to suppress it, but failed.

Then, upon Jimmy's side, Mr. Bilko kept quite still and very silent, right against the corner of the shark Jimmy, gazing at this piece of low cunning, stood as close to him as he could.

A long silence. Then a stealthy movement. The gunman was either moving away or coming to investigate. There was a slight scraping sound. He had touched the rough boards of the shark in his passage.

Suddenly, and with a lightning swift movement, he was round the corner, his gun thrust forward, his lips smiling: "Put 'em . . ."

But at that precise second Mr. Bilko slipped like a fish.

It was a deathly gasp, purely, because Mr. Bilko was unready, and with good reason. He had been out in a boat, he had got very wet, and his bowler hat was wet. Also he had committed murder for less.

The gunman's pistol went off, but the bullet went harmlessly into the night as the man himself fell backwards and down.

Jimmy was atop of him like lightning, grabbing for the dangerous gun hand, securing it and waiting it. Mr. Bilko smiled carefully. The gun clattered to the rough stones. Mr. Bilko smiled it, and the bullet was over. They dragged the man to his feet.

He was a thin, white-faced fellow, with a certain deadness in his eyes, the deadness of the lost killer.

He stood there silently, puffing for breath, and kept wiping his bearded eye with heavily-streaked fingers.

"Now, my honey boy," said Mr. Bilko with kindly banter, "that is where you will find me ever been here. Now this 'at' it can't follow him, and you've spent it. Got any money on you?"

He began to go through the man's pockets. The fellow began to:

"Here, what the devil do you think you're doing?"

Mr. Bilko smiled benevolently.

"Nothing to what I'm going to do in a minute."

Jimmy remained silent. His friend and comrade was quite capable of handling this verbal battle without any assistance from him.

A pocket wallet was found. It contained two pounds and one ten shilling notes. Mr. Bilko took one of the pound notes, counted out the shillings from his own pocket and returned the wallet and the change to the gunman.

"That's that," he said. "For the fair all the world over, and you spend my 'at, so you've got to pay for it. But that you'll have any use for, the change when I'm finished with you, but I always like to start clear before I fall away."

"What're you going to do?" The man asked the question sharply, and now there was a little hint of fear in his voice.

"Take you out to sea and drown you," said Mr. Bilko. "I hate boats, but this is a time when I've got to go in one. Come on, Jimmy, bring the body with you."

The man cried out, and tried to wriggle free. Mr. Bilko pulled the gun into his side.

"Stop!" he roared; and the man stopped.

into it. After all, he was a hired assassin, one of the worst of living things, and he deserved no mercy. Jimmy cut off and got the boat hoisted. The boat sailed, and no one saw Mr. Bilko's grins.

The gunman was crouching on the middle thwart, and looking anxiously about him. Above he was in his element, but the dark, narrow sea, splashing within a foot of him, held unknown terrors to stir fear in the heart of a hard man. Now and again a wave came over the prow and drenched his back, as that he shivered and huddled down lower.

There were about a quarter of a mile off shore when suddenly he said to himself:

"You can't do this! You can't! I can't swim a stroke!"

"This it'll soon be over," said Mr. Bilko comfortably. "It's the swimmers what suffers most, believe me. Now you take a chap like me. I might have swum the Channel if I'd tried when I was young. And think of the torture I'd go through if you pulled me overboard instead of me pulling you in a minute or two. . . . Keep her going, Jimmy!"

The man crouched lower. His hands were working together. A hard, dry old man's face. He, who was utterly fearless, was looking so sorry.

His, the new type of criminal, the coward who carries the sword a weapon, the pistol which can be hidden in a pocket and fired treacherously from that pocket, was meeting him face to face. His nerve was breaking.

On went the boat. She made somewhat heavy weather of it, for the wind was strengthening.

The man spoke again, with the same stalling malice.

"Let up! For Heaven's sake! I'll do anything . . . anything . . . You won't do it. You won't!"

"What can you do?" demanded Mr. Bilko contemptuously. "When you haven't got a gun you're sunk. Your head is only good when you're armed and the other chap's not. Tell me things," said the gun man. "I'll tell the truth. I will. The truth!"

"That'll be a change," said Mr. Bilko. "Now let me see. How long does it take a man to drown, Jimmy?"

"Five or ten minutes," said Jimmy vaguely.

"Right. Over you go, monkey!"

Mr. Bilko leaned forward. The man literally staggered, a high wild cry which came heaving from his lips against the wind, and was whirled away into the night.

"Listen! Listen! You've got to listen, Bragginsman, put me on. He did. He put me on. I was in his boat. He left me alone to wait for you and tell you. He pays me to do that. He does. Listen! It's the Phantom Ship he's after. I know its name now. He pulled it up. I do really. And there's a fellow called Tom Farrington."

Mr. Bilko, not back. He was keeping himself quite calm.

"Go on," he said. "Lying won't help you, but tell me. I am a man to make it a rule never to believe anything anybody tells me, and I am right about eighty times out of a hundred."

"It's the truth. The truth. Don't put me overboard! I'm trying to help you."

"So you?" grunted Mr. Bilko. "Look at this 'at! Trying to help! What are you like when you're not trying? Now sort of blime you! I must say. You're going west. Come on, Jimmy. Bump-hum!"

The man was now in his knees on the bottom of the boat. He clutched at Mr. Bilko's knee. His face was streaming with perspiration, despite the chill of the wind, and his eyes were wild.

His lips moved almost soundlessly for a moment, his tongue constantly touching them. He was near to collapse, but Mr. Bilko was utterly fearless and took to pay to him.

"You need listen." It was almost a sob. "You must. The ship's called the *Phantom*. She is. Bragginsman's got one of her crew. A man called Tom Farrington. He's been making around spring. And they've got Gerrish."

The announcement regarding Tom Farrington's plight being of possible interest to Mr. Bilko, seeing that they were related through marriage, was of vital importance not only from a strategic but also from a purely personal standpoint.

"Where is Farrington?" asked Mr. Bilko.

"Bragginsman's got him at the house. Make it. You can't throw me overboard, will you? I swear."

"Don't you," said Mr. Bilko roughly.

"Now listen me. Tom's up at the house. He started. 'Here! What's that about Gerrish?'"

"He knew the others knew got Gerrish. That's all. Where they've got him we don't know. But they've got him. And Bragginsman's told them Farrington's at Gerrish's and returned. And that's all I know."

The man added this statement so simply that it bore every aspect of the truth. He looked at the bottom of the boat and watched Mr. Bilko with trembling lips while Mr. Bilko sat above him like Fate in a bowler hat.

Mr. Bilko looked at Jimmy. Jimmy nodded and got the boat moved. They had got all they wanted, and Jimmy could not but help admire Mr. Bilko's strategy.

He had not offered the man the alternative of telling or being thrown overboard, and thus raised the possibility of hauling a plausible lie. He had acted as though he had had every intention of drowning the villain, and the gunman had told the truth in a desperate effort to save his life.

"What're you going to do now?" asked the man, averting himself to a thwart and watching Mr. Bilko intently.

Mr. Bilko again looked at Jimmy, and it was Jimmy who supplied the way out of their immediate problem.

"Hand you over to the police," he said.

"Charged with carrying a loaded pistol and attempted murder."

"Here."

"Short up," roared Mr. Bilko. "Me and my friend here got enough to do to sail this ship without worrying me more about you."

The man said no more. They ran ashore, and Jimmy said to Mr. Bilko:

"Ary, look after him. I am getting on the telephone."

There was a low buzz as "A.R." payment system so it, and he was then able to ring up London direct. He got through to his uncle in a few minutes, but a word with him, and was out of the boat.

"And to the copper station," he grunted to Mr. Bilko. "Instead of to look. Come on, you gentle little book."

They loaded the gunman along with them. By the time they reached the police station a "clear the box" call had come through from a Very High Quarter in London. The man was put into a cell.

The charge was carrying a pistol and attempted murder. He asked if he could see a solicitor or a friend, and, to his astonishment, the response was refused.

As they left the police station Jimmy said to Mr. Bilko: "I got through to Uncle Broadwater at the old, told him what had happened, and asked if he could arrange for the man to be held and not allowed to see anybody. I was afraid he might decide to let Bragginsman's lot know what he had been here. I tell you. I think Uncle Broadwater got through to the Home Secretary, or somebody. 'Ary, we're moving along the Very Best People.'"

"Are we moving to bed?" asked Mr. Bilko.

"No. To the Old Master House to see the Old Nurse and his Old Old Clerk. To visit him. Bragginsman. Come on."

Mr. Bilko grunted and ambled alongside Jimmy up the road.

★ CONDEMNED MAN TALKS

JIMMY entered as protest. He knew Mr. Bilko was perfectly well aware of what he was about, so to give him his head.

They came to the boat and swung the man

MODERN

Ideas that are Making a New World



MARVELS

Discoveries that are Foretelling the Future

CANADA'S COAST-TO-COAST ROAD

Soon Canada hopes to complete a great motor highway which will stretch from coast to coast, enabling a motorist to travel from the Atlantic to the Pacific on an unbroken route.

The road is complete but for two sections which total 400 miles, and attempts are now to be made to finish them.

Some idea of what the road will have out is gained by the fact that to carry out these last 400 miles of the work will call for an expenditure of \$2,000,000.

Over a 3000 telephone and telegraph lines which are complete will be the longest in the world—5,000 miles—in the combined service of Western and Eastern.

MACHINE THAT TYPES IN SHORTHAND

The automatic shorthand typist has just arrived—from France.

A picture of the automatic shorthand typist—the Shorthand.



In appearance and operation it is like a machine typewriter and shorthand words are printed on a roll, which can be torn off and handed to typists to transcribe.

"Shorthand" can be done at any speed up to 350 words a minute—in normal language, and the machine can be carried about as easily as a camera.

It has already been used for recording debates at League of Nations conferences.

Over 100,000 RECENTLY used about that, of the \$10,000 radio receiving sets sold during 1933, 340,000 were all-wave sets. The total radio sales for the year (including vacuum tubes and etc.) amounted \$25,000,000.

WIRELESS MESSAGES UNDER THE SEA

A WONDERFUL new aerial system now permits submarines to listen-in while submerged.

Satisfactory radio reception while under water has been very difficult in the past, but a special telescopic aerial has been devised to jostle at the new-type Marconi wireless direction-finder, which overcomes the difficulty.

By the use of an electric boat as a aerial can be raised to a height from which the vessel is 20 meters. From there down to a depth of 25 feet the direction-finding apparatus can be worked just as satisfactorily as in a surface vessel, and so the crew will no longer have to depend on complicated calculations to discover just where they are.

Though the Admiralty admits that the Navy has a method of keeping in wireless communication with submarines while under water, the system which remains a close secret.

"SOAP-BUBBLE" GLASS FIGHTS DISEASE

A NEW weapon in the fight against disease, and the latest of these is the invention of a type of glass which is as thin as a soap-bubble.

Heating ultraviolet rays will not pass through the glass used in making ordinary electric bulbs, and the special bulbs which have to be used for medical purposes are very costly.

But the new soap-bubble glass is only two thousandths of an inch thick, and a bubble of this thin glass is set into the ordinary glass which is used to allow the rays to pass through.

The reason for setting this window into the heavier glass of the bulb is that the soap-bubble glass is too fragile for making into a complete bulb.

GIANTS OF THE MODERN WORLD World's Largest Artificial Electric Discharge

IN the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in America, is the most powerful electrostatic generator in the world.

It is designed to develop direct current of approximately 10,000,000 volts pressure. Up to the time of building this giant machine, the greatest voltage obtained was only 100,000.

The main features of the generator are two aluminum spheres fifteen feet in diameter, which rest on insulating columns twenty five feet high and six feet wide.

The insulators of these metal spheres are fitted up as compact insulators with light and modern electrical instruments, so while the machine is discharging an air ionization voltage the actual power is the full voltage of the air ionization.

The machine works in such a way that the actual terminals. Their location takes the full voltage of the air ionization, but as they are insulated from the Earth they feel no inconvenience.

The remarkable machine, which discharges 5,000,000 volts from each terminal, will be used in the study of X-rays, short waves, and the mysterious cosmic rays, as well as to the speed and height of which is urgently required.



The great sphere of the generator.

LEGS LENGTHENED TO ODDER?

ONE of the latest developments in orthopedic surgery is a process which can increase the length of a crippled man's leg some three or four inches!

This is a brief idea of the method employed.

The patient is first put under anesthetic, then the skin of the leg cut to the bone, and a new bone is made, covered to one side by a bone which is held in the position produced. Next the surgeon cuts a large and groove in the longer bone (femur) and a transverse slot in the shorter bone (fibula) with a powerful electric rotary saw. The wound is then closed with the flaps still in place.

When the wound begins to heal around the wires, then the flaps are used to separate the cut bones.

About one-third of an inch is gained daily, nature filling in the gaps as they are carefully opened.

Over a dozen electrical devices have been made for the purpose of increasing the length of the leg, but this is the best.

UNDERFOOT STREET LIGHTING?

The familiar lamp-post may soon be a thing of the past!

A bridge at Cincinnati, in America, has taken a system of underfoot illumination.



A picture of the underfoot lighting on a bridge.

which shows up the road as a ribbon of surface at night.

It is claimed that this system has advantages over the lights mounted on posts, as it illuminates more.

Over 100,000 feet of the new system is now being used at a recent dental exhibition held in New York and has been made for patients to lay eyes on the new 1000 m.c. wire on view.

MAIN LINES TO GO UNDERGROUND

THERE is a distinct possibility that railway lines running into Charing Cross, and perhaps Waterloo, in London may go underground.

The new Chairman of the London County Council believes that in the next twenty years the main surface lines may be taken up with the Underground Railway system.

If this comes about there should be a free chance for London's town planners, for the great area of such of the present day railway termini would be available to builders.

Underground stations on a large scale would then, to the rule, and the space the surface traffic now occupy might be given over to road construction.

Each a scheme would also call for greater electrification of our main lines.

SPACE

STRANGE ADVENTURES on an Island Floating in the Immensity of Space. A Science Story—by a Scientist.

★ DISASTER IN WONDER MOUNTAIN

VICTOR STANDISH gazed around in amazement at the fantastic and mysterious apparatus which was crowded pile upon pile in the great mountain of space island.

The only Earthly place with which he could compare it was a mighty power station, but it was relatively only a tiny place compared with this fantastic structure.

Everything seemed strange and moving on the amazing island speeding through space, and it was all a scene of wonder to Victor and his two companions.

They had come to space island in strange circumstances. While on a motorcycling holiday in England some weeks before Victor's old truck of a machine had broken down. While searching round for a garage with his two companions, Peter Hensley and Philip Dege, he had come upon a shed which housed a gasoline flying machine.

Cautiously overruling their, they had entered the shed, and it was then that a change occurred on the part of Philip had originated the amazing tale.

Without any warning the machine had gone leaping upwards, carrying the shed away with it.

Baffled, the three companions had tried to stop the shed, but all their efforts served only to send the great vessel racing faster up into space.

Professor Slater, who had built the shed, desperate, in secret ready for an attempt to travel the depths of space, had arrived on the scene just in time to see his amazing creation go speeding upwards.

But his amazement and horror were as nothing compared with that of the three amazing travelers who found themselves ascending towards Mars at a thousand miles an hour.

Knowing nothing of the outside of the shed they could not succeed in stopping it, and so they tumbled towards the Red World, encountering strange and terrible experiences as bolts of radiation, in a fight with a strange monster, and finally with the influence of deadly messengers from Mars.

Only the swift work of Philip Dege, who had succeeded in discovering something of the controls, had saved them from destruction by a Death Ship from the Red World, and thus they had found themselves traveling into a strange new—“atmosphere.”

Here they had seen a number of floating islands, and Philip had landed the *Discoverer* on the largest of them—down.

The three space travelers had been greeted by a strange people—a race of men twice as

tall as Earthly beings and far in advance of world civilization.

The king of the *Discoverer* had taken the three young Earthlings into his own home, and was now showing them the wonders of a mighty mountain which towered in the center of the island.

Here were housed all the results of their civilization—great radio machines, television apparatus, astronomical instruments and hundreds of gadgets and machines of which the three space travelers could make nothing.

Victor was gazing at everything in amazement.

Turning to the king, he asked, “What are all these things?”

You have asked a question which would take many years to answer,” replied the king. “But here, in this tower, is stored the work of hundreds of thousands of centuries.

By PROFESSOR A. M. LOW, D.Sc.

The Famous Scientist and Inventor

Through some of these apparatuses we can see and hear some of the planets, including your Earth, and we can study various forms of life in space, the space islands, of which there are quite a number, and also the huge animal life which floats about your atmosphere.”

“Yes,” remarked Peter. “we encountered one of these animals and were lucky to get away.”

“You certainly were,” said the island king. “for besides splitting out miles of deadly fumes, they have the power to create possible space hurricanes. But you must tell me all about these adventures later.”

The king had just intended as they were about to enter the three space floors when there was another explosion which threw all of them, including the king, to the ground.

The explosion was followed by another and yet another, the terrifying sounds echoing through the mighty structure like peal upon peal of thunder, a tremendous cascade of sparks flying from a jagged piece of apparatus which stood in the center of the mountain.

It was shaped like a tub and towered a hundred feet above the ground. Smoke was billowing from its sides and millions of electric sparks which lit up the gloom in a weird and terrible way.

All three turned instinctively towards the island king, who, like themselves, was clambering to his feet again. Then there was another devastating explosion, and this time enormous masses of molten metal were flung in all directions. Then came a long drawn-out hissing noise, as though steam from ten thousand boilers was escaping.

The king shouted something to the space travelers, but the noise was so deafening that they could hear nothing.

The king beckoned to them to follow him, and he led them along a kind of alley-way he moved into a rack and signalled to them to do the same.

But a moment later, as they were leaving a corner where the alley-way appeared to run—up in three or four directions, they lost sight of the king, because of the dense smoke that was now filling the tower.

So there was it, that when Victor, realizing that the king was no longer ahead, stopped and turned round, he could not see his companions, though they were immediately behind him.

Another explosion? Still another fire? Having got of sparks and smoke, and, indeed, Victor returned to his companions. But his shock was not a penny effort compared with the appalling one in the vault. Now the floor of the mountain seemed to be shaking, and Victor had a terrible feeling that the walls would crack in upon him.

A further explosion came from another part of the tower, and this time was followed by what appeared to be a flash of deadly white lightning, so vivid that it penetrated even the deep gloom and smoke.

Victor yelled. He started all he was home.

Here he was close amid the twinkling diamonds of the Mystery Mountains.

★ MOUNTAIN OF DEATH

VICTOR groped forward in the darkness. He gave another shout, and a reply came a second or two later.

He recognized Peter's voice, and was in the direction from whence it came.

With sounds of explosion still crashing about him, Victor made his way down the passage. Fumes and smoke wreathed him. Then he stumbled over something and he heard his own name being loudly whispered.

“Victor, Victor,” cried the voice. “It is me, Peter.”

“What a goodness,” cried Victor, bending down. “Are you hurt?”

“Only a bit,” answered Peter. “I can't say anything on anything.”

“Where's Philip?” asked Victor. “I don't know,” returned the other. “I lost him at the last turn.”

The terrible series of rumbling noises in the Mystery Mountain were growing quieter now, but the deep growl like that of Earth thunder, was still present.

"And what's happened to the king, fellow?" said Victor. "Perhaps he's lost, though I expect he'll be able to find his way out all right."

"I don't know," came Peter's reply. "If he's outside, he must be worrying about us. He's a decent fellow. Perhaps he's searching for us. We'd better stay where we are for a bit."

"You're right," said Victor. "I'll try shouting for Philip again." He yelled loudly, and his voice went echoing through the passages, but again there was no reply.

"This corridor," said Peter, "seems to be lifting a bit. I can see quite well now."

Victor nodded in agreement, and looked around in the hope of seeing some sign of Philip or the island king.

As the black curtain slowly descended the chaos could no longer be seen. Great quantities of what had previously been huge and elaborate machinery were scattered everywhere. These were machines used in the work of the Mystery Mountain. Few of the workers had escaped.

As far as the chance could be seen, the tower had collapsed about eight or ten enormous galleries packed with apparatus.

Now only one—the top gallery—remained. All the mass of machinery that had been piled up in the center of the mountain was just one great mass of wreckage, and much of it was still smoldering.

There was no sign of Philip, the island king.

Victor and Peter decided to wait until the smoke lifted sufficiently to enable them to search for their companions.

After a time Victor noticed Peter in his feet. He stumbled, and it looked as if he had strangled his neck badly.

Victor put his arm round his friend's shoulders to support him, and clearly they began to move in the direction of the spot where they had been when the disaster came.

Movement was difficult because the floor of the place was littered with debris.

Suddenly Victor yelled out and pointed down a distant passage. "There's Philip," he said quickly. "Yes, it must be him. The clothes are much bigger. Hi! Philip!"

At the top of his voice Victor shouted, and then he saw the figure waving in their direction.

"They waited in reply and hastened forward."

"Are you all right?" cried Victor when all three were together again.

"Yes," was Philip's answer. "Where the blast did you go to? I've been searching—but, yes, Victor, are you all right? Your face is covered with blood."

"It's nothing," replied Victor. "A splinter got me. But Peter's smashed his ankle up."

At that moment there was another dull explosion in the mountain, and the rumbling

They turned this what seemed to be a sort of corridor.

Still the rumbling increased, rising to a deafening roar which echoed and rebounded through the vast-lake interior of the mountain.

Then something crashed with a mighty roar. What it was the space travellers could not make out, but the ground shook violently beneath them and the walls cracked probably. It seemed as though at any second the mighty structure might crash down on their heads.

As they went the corridor twisted and turned. They must get out somehow or perish. It was too late to turn back.

Then came another explosion and still another, each one louder and more terrifying than the last. The whole place was shaking in a series of spasms.

"Beaten," gasped Philip, "we'll be burned alive."

The continued darkness had given rise to Philip's mind to the terrible fact that the passage, instead of leading to safety, was taking them further into the Mystery Mountain.

Then, just as all three had given up hope they saw a light ahead.

It was dark and vague, but still a light—daylight.

"It's a way out," cried Victor. "We'll be safe—if we can only make it."

The rumbling, clanging and explosions in the mountain were all about them as they hurried on.

The very floor of the place shook, and the walls were crashing down.

Gradually, however, the light drew nearer, and even as they reached it, the walls through which they passed were crashing away.

Then, thoroughly exhausted, they came out into the open.

★ BACK TO EARTH

THESE were a great crowd of the space travellers were watching and waiting. The king was among them, and he looked forward.

"You are safe!" he cried. "It is a miracle. This is one of the most dreadful accidents that has ever happened in the history of our country and that it should have occurred when you were here is all the more terrible. But we are thankful that you have emerged from it. Your spaces are not serious, I hope."

"They're nothing," answered Peter. "I gave my ankle a wrench, and my friend here was cut about a bit."

"I am glad. But tell me," asked the island king, "how did you make your escape?"

"We found a corridor," replied Philip. "When the first explosion occurred I thought I saw a number of the people rushing that way."

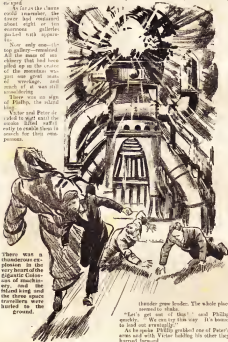
"That is right," said the king. "I myself was endeavoring to lead you to it, but the smoke prevented you from following me and we lost track. My people and myself tried hard to find you."

The king looked at the ruins of the Mystery Mountain and sighed.

"There were the work of many centuries. It will have to be rebuilt again. Luckily we have records of all our knowledge. You are no doubt wondering how it came to happen. I will tell you."

For some centuries we have been making experiments to find out how to transmit power through space and recently some of our experiments have met with startling success. True, they are as yet not complete. Unfortunately, one of my inventors was preparing to show you the machine in operation, but he was killed and the result was a series of explosions which spread to the other equipment and machinery. It was the power transmitter that caused the most

(Continued at foot of next page)

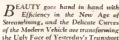


There was a thunderous explosion in the very heart of the gigantic Coliseum of machinery, and the island king and the three space travellers were hurled to the ground.

thunder grew louder. The whole place seemed to shake.

"Let's get out of this!" said Philip quickly. "We can try this way. It's bound to lead out eventually."

As he spoke Philip grabbed one of Peter's arms and with Victor holding his other they hurried forward.

OUR
COVER
ARTICLE

It is noted that during its way through the city, the car has a light grey camouflage to the world, resembling a coat of similar capacity would suit. It is a smooth, solid, lighter, for good appearance, and is a bright array of lines 25 to 30 years old.

148 *Microgaster* - a small genus, the members of which are a "living" corner blade. The two wings under being of the upper-angled wings of the same type after maturity are known as the wings of the wing. A little black dot, the most of the ground foliage, and that is about all it is.

As there are many naturally first machine programs—the chapters of a revolutionary novel being put on the table were known—then when a second-order logic model is applied, it is not to find the unrepresented components of the understanding of other people.

In the central cabin was a large oval containing diagrams and instruments drawn to the utmost detail, and a man's glance at it was enough to ascertain all there that it would be possible to follow the instructions.

rapidly had the ship hoisted properly from the lower island that it had violated from under.

to guide the ship to Earth they had not
truly not expected to find themselves here,
near England, but they suddenly were.
A good landing was made, and a couple

It may seem wrong to give speed still a free pass, even as the tolls are lowered by adding a long and tapering tail. But since the general public gets a choice as to how strongly it conditions its old types of wire ships, planes, and trains, it will soon look as one of state as a choice of state.

Time

Next week: THE BLACK VULTURES

X-RAY

ALPHA APPROVED

These clearly visible prints of your arms, legs and hands reveal a shocking fact about you. They show the state of your bones. The most startling discovery is that 90% of the population is suffering from osteoporosis. This is a condition that weakens the bones and makes them brittle. It is the leading cause of fractures in the elderly. The good news is that there is a simple, effective way to prevent this. It's called Alpha. Alpha is a powerful bone-building supplement that has been clinically proven to increase bone density and strength. It's the only supplement that has been shown to be effective in both men and women. Alpha is the only supplement that has been shown to be effective in both men and women. Alpha is the only supplement that has been shown to be effective in both men and women.




POST 26

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